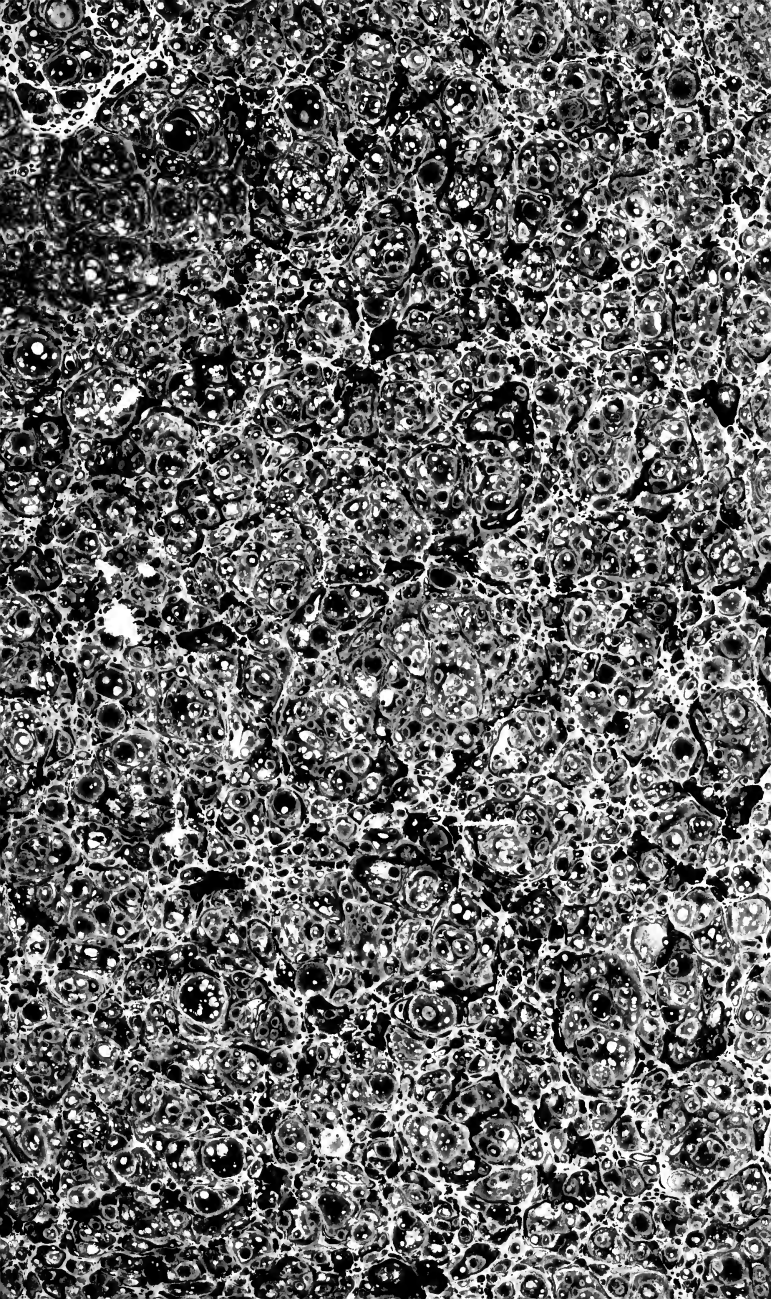
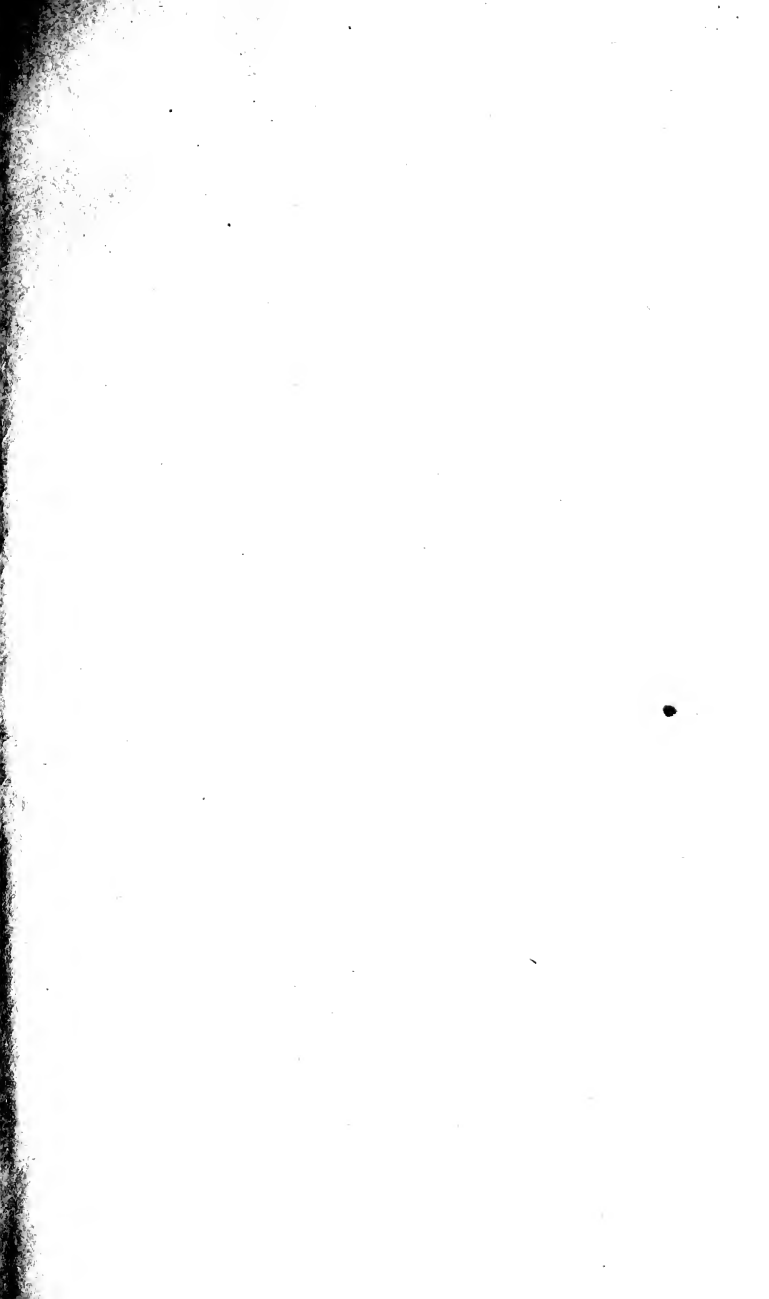


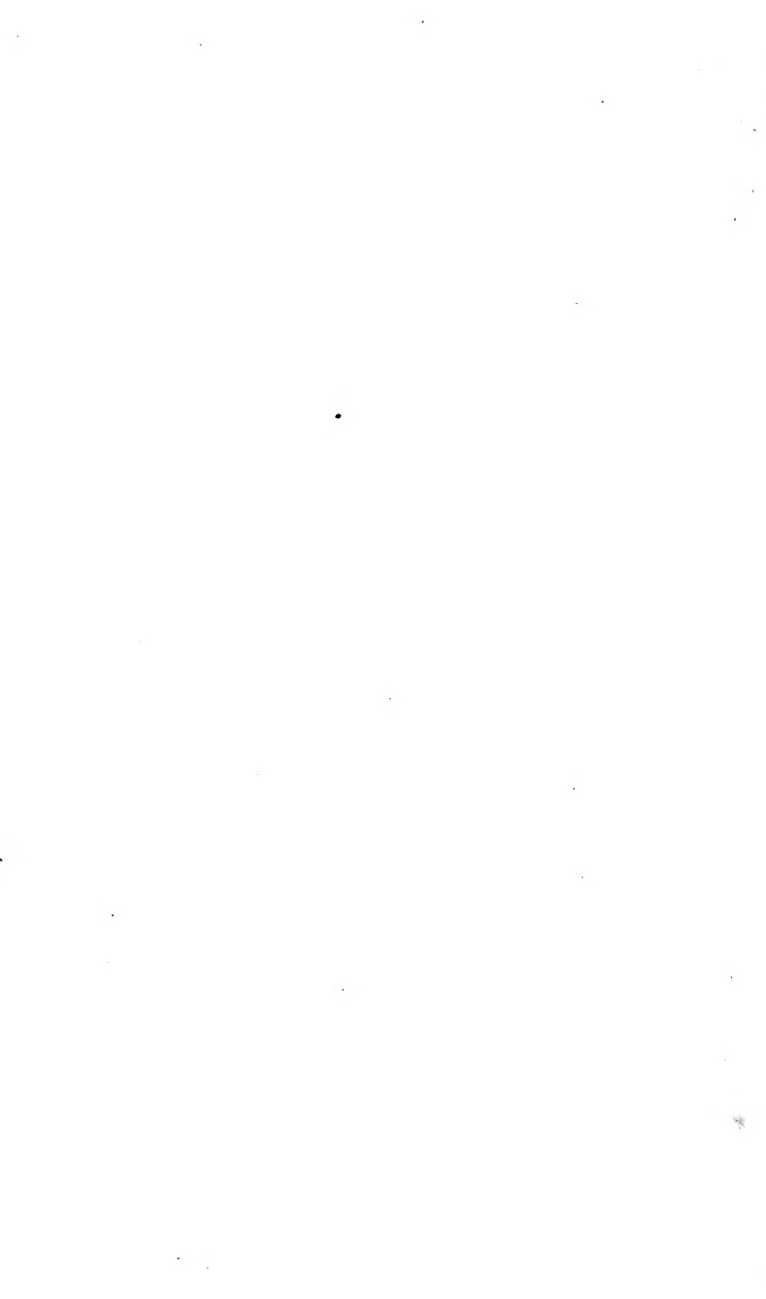
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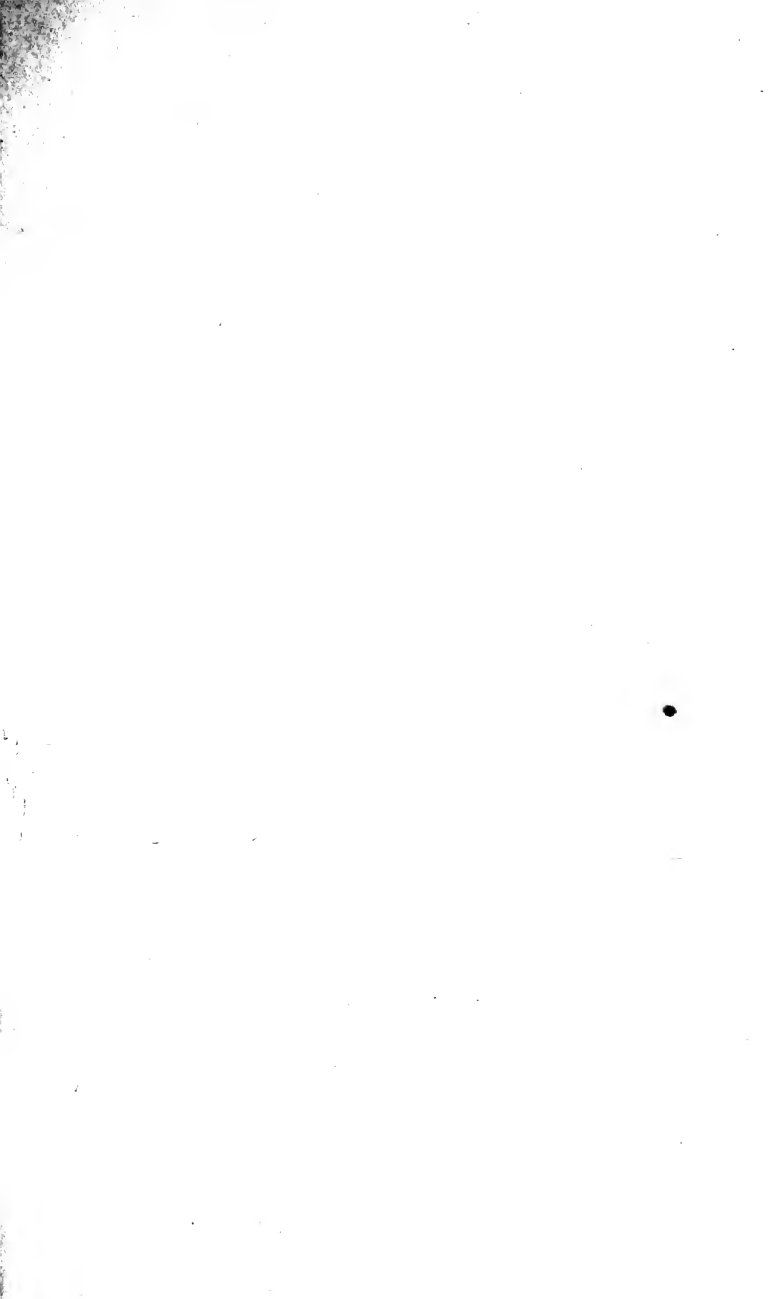


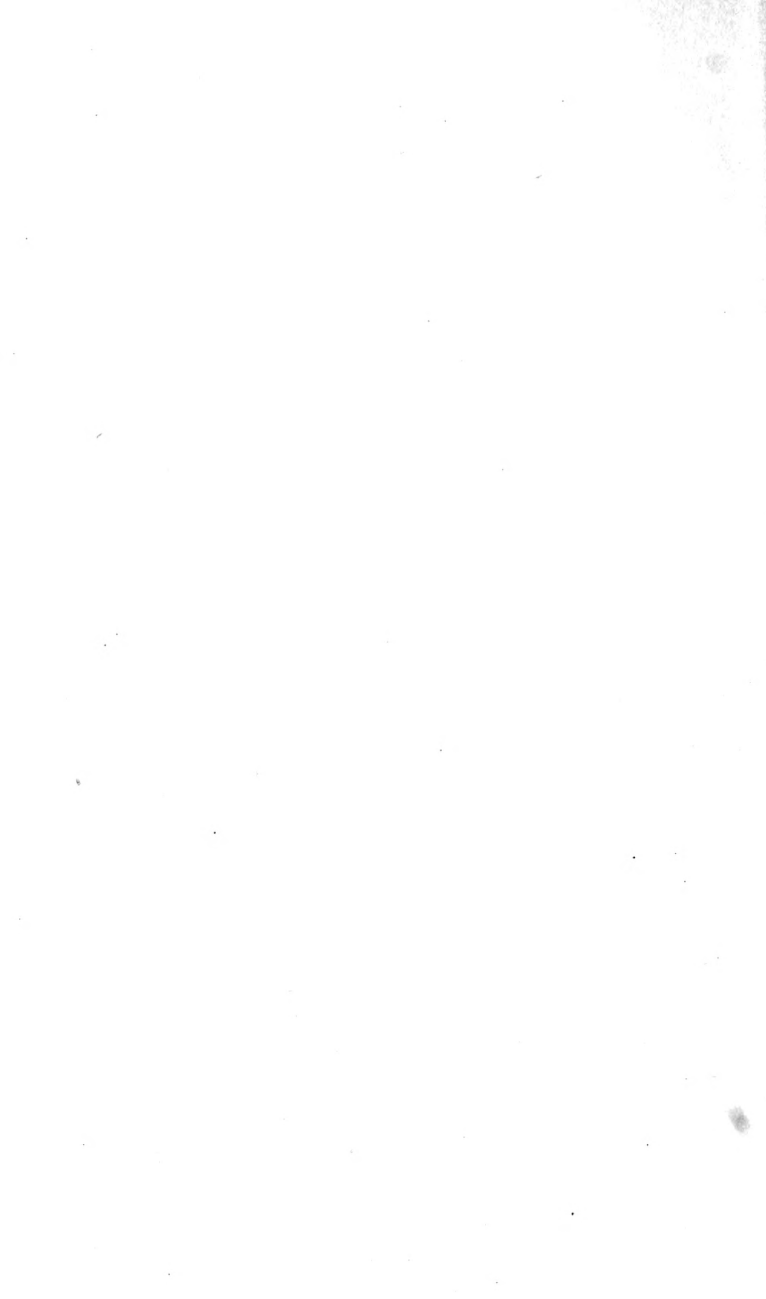












GREVILLE:

OR,

A SEASON IN PARIS.

BY MRS. GORE,

AUTHORESS OF

"MRS. ARMYTAGE," "THE PEERESS," ETC.

Catherine Grace Frances (Moody) Gore

"Oh! English people,—English people!—why can you not stay
and perish of apoplexy and Yorkshire pudding at home?"—

PELHAM.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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GREVILLE;

OR,

A SEASON IN PARIS.

CHAPTER I.

Childe Harold had a mother, not forgot,
Though parting from that mother he did shun !—
Yet deem not thence his breast a breast of steel,
Ye who have known what 'tis to dote upon
A few dear objects, will in sadness feel
Such partings break the heart they fondly hope to heal.
BYRON.

MORE than a year had elapsed since the fortunes and peace of mind of Lord Greville were shattered by the startling blow conveyed in the confessions of his mother, when, one gloomy November afternoon, a travelling carriage, whose extreme simplicity was apparent

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even through the thick coating of mud disfiguring the panels, drew up before the door of the Hotel Voltaire, in the Rue de Lille.

The young man who alighted from it, unaccompanied by a single attendant, was apparently in infirm health. His form and face, though of distinguished beauty, were sallow and emaciated,—his movements languid,—and in his large grey eyes shone none of the vivacity or intelligence becoming his age and condition. For it was the young Earl of Greville, worn down by sorrow and suffering, returning, after prolonged absence, to his native country.

He was come from the East,—from the climes to which men of ardent minds are apt to turn for excitement or consolation, when irritated by cares arising out of the forms of civilized life. In the first moments of distraction succeeding the shock occasioned by his mother's communications, unable to meet her with composure,—apprehensive, every moment, of inflicting reproach by his air of sadness or

abstraction,—he perceived the impossibility of a longer sojourn at the Abbey; and determined on a cruise of some duration, as the only mode of absenting himself calculated to relieve her anxieties with regard to his continental predilections.

He quitted home without a farewell interview;—he dared not expose his fortitude to the trial of his mother's tears. He felt for *her* almost more than for himself. Next to himself, indeed, she seemed to him of all created beings the most deserving compassion. But what availed such sympathy?—The more indulged, the more they became mutually disposed to aggravate each other's wrongs and sorrows.

“During my absence, she will learn to create for herself other interests in life!” mused the Earl. “For *me*, movement and excitement are at this moment indispensable; while for *her*, no less essential is the lesson of dispensing with my presence!”

Without a word of warning, accordingly,

Greville quitted the Abbey,—a spot to which he had conceived the strongest aversion. A few days before, on arriving there, he had contemplated the beauties of the place with triumph; as a scene to which he was about to transplant the persons dearest to him, to whom the delicious home scenery of an English park, with its majestic timber and grassy glades, must afford a new sense of enjoyment. But now, in his altered state of feeling, he threw himself into a corner of the carriage, as though eager to shut out all view of a place to which he was attached by ties fraught with dishonour.

All he desired, was to rend asunder every association connecting him with home. The project, however, was suggested by his mother. When, in the first outbreak of his despair, he had enlarged to Lady Greville upon the impossibility of confronting honest men, such as Dowdeswell,—Massingberd,—Brooks,—Hardy,—with the consciousness of falsehood betraying itself in every feature, his mother had eagerly

reminded him of the eligibility of absenting himself for a time, and of the wideness of the world as a theatre of human enjoyment. She foresaw that he must return home for comfort after the weariness of much travel,—the window of the ark being ever open to welcome the truant bird; and right gladly had her son accepted the hint,—eager to explore that “world elsewhere,” which she pointed out as containing a Canaan for his overtaken spirit.

The Countess had consequently no grounds for complaint, on receiving, after his departure, the letter of adieu announcing the projects of the self-banished man. But though tender and respectful, there was a deep sadness in its tenour that sounded like the passing-bell of her son!—She saw that he was lost to her for ever—in the spirit if not in the flesh; and though she resigned herself anew to the task of endurance, it was either because her neck had become fitted to the iron yoke of affliction, or because to whatever storms the frail vessel of humanity

may be exposed, the anchor vouchsafed for its sustainment acquires proportionate strength. The patience of the poor mother was blessed with increase a thousand fold, now that she had sorrows to bear not only for herself, but for her son. She did not shed a tear when the newspaper containing news of the sailing of the Antelope fell from her hand.

The first day of composure enjoyed, meanwhile, by the noble exile, was that on which he found himself on the wide ocean, with no record around him of his cares; and for attendants, only the hardy crew to whom their young lord was endeared by former experience of his courage, kindness, and liberality. If conscious of the joy of emancipation from restraint, in his first cruise, what was now his sense of release, in redemption from the observation of society, and the thousand accusing testimonials of home!—

The sky shone brightly over his head,—the light green waves were circling around him.—There was no England for him at that moment,

—no house of peers,—no herald's office,—no clubs,—no coteries, no tinsel of fashion,—no superficial splendours. His passion for the sea, which, like the love of music, may be defined as one of the few sensual pleasures without vice, was a source of blameless consolation.

The irritation of his mind became still more subdued, as he sailed over the blue waters of the Mediterranean, associating in his mind the ecstasy of a period when he had known no sorrow, with the physical enjoyment of the passing hour. He gloried in the idea of turning his back upon the West, with all its vulgar, puny, and pretentious littleness;—and hailing those gorgeous climes, worthy to be the habitation of immortal beings, which have afforded a birthplace to all that is sacred to the minds or imaginations of mankind. Greece,—Egypt,—Palestine,—were about to renew for him the majestic impressions, through whose ennobling influence he had first learned to cast aside the trammels of boyhood.

But, alas! the charm was departed from those consecrated regions, even as the divinities from their desecrated altars. The heart of the listless traveller no longer thrilled within him, amid the solitudes of the city of Ammon; and as he glided along the waters of the Nile, so far from feeling, as on a former occasion, as if penetrating through its mighty channel into the heart of the mysteries of ages, he lay wrapt in meditation upon his mat, the cabin blinds of his *dahabieh* carefully closed to exclude the mid-day heats. Although the shores along which he was gliding, their pyramids, their tombs, their mosques, their temples, their groves of date trees and acacias, were those he had formerly invested with associations of the sublimity of primeval nature, — scenes of far deeper interest were passing before

that inward eye,
Which is the bliss of solitude!—

A greater transition was in progress in his own mind, than between the patriarchal simpli-

city of antediluvian times, and the military despotism of modern Egypt. He was living in the past. Every hour of his anterior existence was becoming imprinted as by a branding iron upon his heart. The words of affection formerly addressed to him seemed inscribed in warning before his eyes, like the mystic writing on the wall. He was forbidden to love,—why not forbidden to live?—or if condemned to live, why not exonerated in mercy from the agonizing duty of retrospection?—He was at war with himself,—at war with destiny:—like Jacob, he wrestled with the Omnipotent!

But it is amid the fervour of struggles such as these, that the mind of man acquires an heroic texture; and as a fair and fertile world emerged from the confusion of chaos at the fiat of a master will, the human character issues forth reduced to order from the conflict of its restless impulses. All that was boyish, all that was trivial in Greville, disappeared amid the buffetings of his hour

of adversity. The moment the real business of life begins, we fling to the winds our illusions and affectations; as the mariner, on the rising of the tempest, cuts away and flings overboard the superfluous rigging of his vessel.

Alone with that second self so often overlooked amid the turmoil of the world, (that second self, the apparition of which, like the wraiths of the misty north, or the spectral reflections of his own image rendered back to the wanderer on the Brocken, appals like an omen,) Greville recoiled with awe from the consciousness of his responsibilities.

The vastness of the scenes he was traversing,—the majesty of ages as exemplified in their monuments,—inspired him at once with contempt and reverence for the frail creatures vibrating between mortality and immortality, to whose enjoyment are conceded the beauties of earth, as if to palliate the cares of their brief probation; and in the solitude of the wilderness, he seemed

to stand alone and humbled before the Maker of mankind, like Adam in his garden, yearning to conceal his fallen nature.

Impressions such as these, tended at least to efface the petty irritations of vanity and self-love engendered amid the corruptions of social life! But while the mind of Greville became enlightened and matured by hours, weeks, months, of solitary self-communion, his constitution sank under the mingled influence of climate and despondency. From Ebsambul, where he had landed in the heat of the day, at the suggestion of his Nubian attendants, to explore the splendid rock temple of Re, discovered by Belzoni, he returned to the boat utterly exhausted. It was in vain that Abdallah, the Captain or Reis of his berbers, tendered the simple remedies of the country. The sufferer was smitten with disease, past the reach of such medicaments. Stupor seemed to have seized upon his faculties. All night, he lay insensible, under the influence of one of the pernicious fevers of the country; and at

dawn of day the Reis, alarmed at his own responsibility, and deeply interested in the fate of his gentle patron, whose danger was imminent, resolved to steer for the village of Wady Halfa, and land the unconscious sufferer.

And there, in an Ethiopian hovel, almost within view of the mountains of Dongola, remote from all trace of civilization and surrounded by the "dusky men of Ind," lay the loved of so many hearts,—about to render up his soul in a pagan country, where no spiritual rites might consecrate his sepulchre in the sand!—Even the stern Abdallah, as he watched by the couch on which the dying man had been landed from his dahabieh, could scarcely refrain from tears as he contemplated the lonely deathbed of the handsome young Frank.

Yet Greville was at that moment scarcely an object of commiseration. Round that desolate couch, were visions of joy and happiness. The delusions of fever were restoring to him the loved—the lost.—Kindly greetings were breathed in

his ears,—earnest eyes fixed their tender gaze upon his face.—Instead of the feathery palm-trees waving over that miserable roof, the stately oaks of Greville Abbey,—the blooming groves of the Tuileries—seemed to shelter his head; and the cool, green turf of Chantilly, or of his still dearer England, was under his feet, in place of the burning sands of the Nubian desert!—

It is true, these visions of peace were intermingled with fantastic shows of the gigantic halls of Carnac, where the terrific figures of Memnon and Sesostris, as he had recently beheld them in their appalling effigies, seemed to move visibly through the ghastly distance;—or frightful processions of the warlike triumphs of Rameses, attended by the clang of arms and roaring of thunder.—All that the land of Cush had supplied of heroic imagery, all that the desolation of Thebes had conjured up to bewilder his imagination, recurred by fits to his distracted brain, between the intervals of his remembered moments of tenderness and joy.

How long he lay the victim of this struggle between life and death, he knew not. His first consciousness was that of gasping back into a sense of more painful vitality ; and finding pitying faces of strangers hanging over his couch. After the ideal forms that had appeared to flit beside his pillow,—the gentle countenance of Madame de Rostanges and the graceful figure of Eugénie,—it seemed as if his illusions were now beginning, when he noted the linen vesture and wide trowsers cinctured round their naked ancles, of the Arab women who were mercifully sharing the ministry of his Nubian crew. But it was now also that the sufferings of Greville really commenced. It was now that he became conscious of pain, — of peril, — of loneliness ; — it was now that, on his release from danger, he breathed a fervent prayer for release from life !

It might be that narcotics were mingled with the balsamic infusions supplied to him by his attendants, (in spite of the intreaties of a single

venerable derber, who implored them to trust rather to the virtues of a fetish which he had bound round the arm of the unconscious Greville;) for his long convalescence, when afterwards recalled to mind, resembled a prolonged doze, with brief intervals of waking weakness. The Reis, who assumed to himself the office of Hakim in that desolate place, insisted that at the first possible moment a removal to the dahabieh should secure change of air to the invalid; and scarcely had Greville begun to familiarize himself with the strange aspect of his habitation and attendants, when he found his hand pressed fervently to the eyes of the latter, in token of gratitude for the liberalities bestowed in the first moments of returning consciousness, as well as of farewell to the departing guest.

He had sanctioned the proposal of the Reis for their immediate return towards Cairo. Alarmed at the idea of a wealthy Frank dying unattended in the midst of them, the crew were eager to make the best of their way back

to the haunts of civilization ; and never had poor Abdallah uttered his attestation of "God is great" with more pious fervency, than when he surrendered up his charge to the hands of his countrymen, and Greville found himself welcomed once more beneath the hospitable roof of Mr. Hill.

To trace the slow progress of convalescence were a tedious task. For weeks, for months, the restoration of the invalid was so frequently retarded by relapse, that even the Armenian physicians, at first sanguine in their promises of recovery, began to perceive that their leechcraft was circumvented by a moral influence.

"You are strong again, if you knew it,—you are healed, would you but believe it," said they, when the breaking of spring found the young Englishman still loitering in the city of minarets. "Arouse yourself!—gird up your loins. Away to the cities of the desert, and accomplish your mission!"—

In pursuance of these counsels, accordingly,

he resumed his long-purposed excursions. To return a second time from the east without having visited Baalbec, Palmyra, Jerash, or sheltered himself beneath the spicy forest of Lebanon, was impossible. But alas! the result of his exertions was a second attack of fever, in the convent on Mount Sinai; where even the skill and attention of Father Dimitri and his brotherhood scarcely availed to snatch him from the grave.

“The east is unpropitious to me as the west!”—was the reflection of the desponding man when, after eight months’ absence, he returned to Alexandria; and heartily did he rejoice to find himself once more on the deck of the *Antelope*, which had been laid up at Malta throughout the winter, preparatory to a cruise in the Archipelago. Still, his departure was delayed. The exertions required of him at a magnificent fête, given on board a crack English frigate in the harbour of Alexandria, to the young Prince de J——, whose vessel was also lying at

anchor, again disabled him for a time, and retarded his departure.

During his illness, the young Prince, whom he had last encountered under auspices so different, watching the weighing of his royal brother's jockeys in the racing stables at Chantilly, was a frequent visitor to his sick-room at Beverley's Hotel. There was between them the sympathy of generous intrepidity and liberal views; and the Prince took delight in reverting, with the noble English traveller, to those peculiar attractions of climate and character which invest his native land with the privileges of a favourite, and render Paris *l'enfant gâté de l'univers*.

Late in the month of June, Greville was at length enabled to take his stand on the deck of the Antelope, and refresh himself with the breezes of a marine atmosphere. It was not, however, without deep regret that he had adieu to the lands which, though they had conveyed the same injury to his constitution that his spirits had previously sustained from moral causes,

were endeared by a thousand soothing associations.

“ I visited the east for the cultivation of my egotism !” Greville one day observed, in reply to the friendly questioning of the Prince de J——. “ The physical lethargy resulting from tropical climates is said to afford the surest relief to mental excitement. Had my health permitted, I might perhaps have taken to the desert in good earnest ; and passed the remainder of my days under a date-tree, my pipe stationary in my mouth, and my mind in the clouds !”—

There was, however, no semblance of selfishness in the deep emotion with which, previous to his embarkation, he received the adieux of Abdallah. Greville had become sincerely attached to the undemonstrative being who exhibited his fidelity in unremitting, but silent service. His attendance resembled indeed that of one of the genii of his own Africa, obedient to the touch of

a talisman, rather than the noisy officiousness of a European menial.

But this wild ministry, combined with the influences of a country so mysteriously endowed with the majesty of the past, was beginning to tinge with mysticism the morbid reveries of the invalid. His energies were becoming palsied. His mind was imbibing a tone of fatalism.

It was perhaps well for Greville that he was sentenced to bid a timely adieu to the east :— his spirits being in no condition to grapple with the impressions of that land of prodigies, wherein, as from the grave of a giant, a gigantic spectre seems to be arising !—

CHAPTER II.

He loved all waste
And solitary places, where we taste
The pleasure of believing what we see
Is boundless—as we wish our souls to be.

P. B. SHELLEY.

THE ensuing months were months of healthfulness and peace. A seaman's wholesome life exercised its usual happy influence on his constitution ; and the frame, relaxed by the enervating influence of the burning suns and scorching siroc of Africa, and still more by the oppression of profound despondency, gradually rallied under the excitement of stirring breezes and incessant change of scene.

The isles of Greece,
Where burning Sappho loved and sang,

were almost as fair and enthralling to him as of old ; nor was it till the autumn, that a severe attack of illness at Napoli di Romagna, consequent upon imprudent exposure to the air of the marshes, reminded him of the strenuous advice of his Armenian physicians, that he should spend the ensuing winter in the south of France. Hyères had been especially pointed out to him ; in preference to Nice, where throngs of English are beginning to desecrate the resort of disease and death, with all the frivolities of a bathing-place.

His first destination, however, was Marseilles : a disastrous movement !—for on the very evening of the day on which the Antelope dropped anchor in the harbour, the crew, though usually remarkable for the excellence of their subordination, indulged in a deep carouse with the strong potables of France, ending, like other carouses stimulated by ardent spirits, in a desperate affray.

Unluckily, a Corsican sailor of the name of

Anton' Amazzi, to whom Lord Greville, to the dissatisfaction of his men, had given a passage from Corinth, was tempted to draw his stiletto in self-defence : still more unluckily, in wresting the weapon from his hands, the English mate of the Antelope received a mortal wound !—Within four and twenty hours of his landing, Lord Greville was forced to surrender one of his crew into the hands of justice !—

To consign the body of his brave shipmate to the dust of a foreign country, was a painful duty ;—but far more painful was it to watch the slow proceedings of the *Cour d'assises*, while the surviving offender lay in irons, in peril of mortal retribution, or at least of condemnation for life to the galleys. However closely the sympathies of Greville might be enlisted in the fate of his deceased countryman, he thought it cruel and unjust that Amazzi should be sacrificed to a prejudice against the sanguinary propensities of Corsican vindictiveness. It was understood, moreover, that government was desi-

rous of affording, on this occasion, a signal example towards the reinforcement and maintenance of public order, in one of the most unquiet of the southern ports of France.

The frank bearing of the prisoner, and his high courage, interested the feelings of Lord Greville, already strongly influenced by his knowledge of the extenuating facts of the case. He had secured the best advocates to defend the cause of Amazzi; but it was hinted by the advocates he had retained, that the requisition signed by the crew of the *Antelope* in favour of the prisoner, ought to be submitted to the authorities by the hands of the representative of the British government; and that by a proper appeal, the cause might even be removed for hearing into a more auspicious court than the local tribunals.

By the excitement attendant on such a crisis, the nerves of Greville, already enfeebled, were thoroughly disordered. Wherever he directed his wanderings, disaster seemed to overtake him !

Perhaps but for the duty imposed upon him, his depression might have assumed a still more alarming character. But the destiny of a human being was dependent upon his exertions; and flinging aside the habits of indolence he had contracted in his oriental seclusion, he hastened to Paris.

Bitter as it was to him to re-enter its forbidden walls, the call upon his humanity was too peremptory to admit of receding from the trial; moreover the city was wide enough to contain a being so insignificant, and those whose society it was decreed that he must avoid. Nay, Paris is perhaps of all earthly spots the one where persons desirous of remaining apart, are least peremptorily thrust into each other's presence.

So striking too was the alteration in his person, that he had every chance of escaping without recognition, if accidentally placed in collision with his former associates. His movements had lost their elasticity,—his countenance the brilliancy of youth. Care had saddened the

expression of his earnest eyes ; and there was nothing now of the buoyant sensitive being whose slightest emotion used to render the mantling blood perceptible even through the roots of his waving hair. The grave but listless traveller domiciled in the Rue de Lille, was at least ten years older than the gay idler of the preceding year,—the once joyous, once radiant Earl of Greville !—

With the delusion common to hypochondriacs, he fancied that part at least of the change of which he was conscious, must reside in external objects.

“Can this be the Faubourg?”—was his involuntary exclamation, when glancing from the windows of his sitting-room towards the magnificent structure of the Hotel de Commerce, the finest of the modern elevations of Paris, through the misty atmosphere inevitable on an autumnal evening in the immediate neighbourhood of the river.—“Can this dull cheerless city be the same enchanting spot, the memory of which has

so often embellished my day-dreams, under the brightness of an oriental sky?"

And partly from moral, partly from physical disorder, he shuddered audibly as he took refuge by the fireside from view of the foggy street.

There was nothing in his solitary meal calculated to cheer his spirits.—Fred Massingberd would have murmured against the mediocrity of the cooking;—Greville perceived only that he was alone,—how miserably alone!—more lonely far, than amid the solitude of the mighty desert, wherein his soul was elevated to communion far beyond the companionship of mortal nature.

Next day, in one of those pouring rains which look like an act of especial vengeance of the skies, he proceeded to seek audiences in the quarters essential for the despatch of his business. To inscribe his name with a request for an appointment, was the utmost he could accomplish; and his anxiety to avoid all encounter

with his acquaintances in Paris, combined with the state of the weather, soon drove him back to his cheerless home;—a home without books, —without kindred associations,—without anything to render him insensible to the skiey influences of a northern climate on a rainy day.

The humid atmosphere seemed to enfold him like a sheet of lead. After the dry warmth of the east, he was ill-prepared for the chilly moisture of the banks of the Seine. London would probably have put an end to him at once; for even Paris appeared insupportable. He longed for the *bien être* of his preceding winter at Cairo; when, under the eaves of his house, he sat sunning himself, his pipe in his mouth, letting pass the drowsy hours, in a reverie secured by physical beatitude from every gloomy reminiscence.

“This will never do!”—cried Greville, after having examined for the fourth time, with disgust, the landscapes adorning two china vases on his chinneypiece, the wiggy foliage of whose

woods seemed intended to match with the distorted imitations of roses and pansies contained in the vases. "Another such a day, and my nerves will be unstrung past recovery!"—

He even betook himself for relief to the occupation so dear to the French valetudinarian,—*de tisonner le feu*;—when the adroit *laquais de place* stationed in his anteroom, on hearing his duties infringed upon by the movement of logs and tongs, glided in with the usual inquiry of "*Monsieur permet-il que je renouvelle le feu?*"

Monsieur chose, however, to arrange it himself; whereupon François, finding his occupation gone, saw fit to remain in the room, offering his opinion where he was not allowed to offer his assistance. Monsieur, he admitted, arranged a wood fire almost as well as a Frenchman; still *il fallait être né Parisien* to understand exactly the quantity of ashes indispensable to the superstructure, and the precise point where the glowing *braise* was to be encrusted on the pile of *bûches*.

Finding that his new master uttered not a word of remonstrance, François officiously tendered his services to procure some new work from the nearest *cabinet de lecture*—"pour désennuyer Monsieur par le mauvais temps qu'il faisait," furthermore suggesting that, if Monsieur purposed attending one of the theatres, it might not be amiss to secure a box or stall, according to Monsieur's good pleasure.

It was Monsieur's good pleasure to remain at home; but he expressed his intentions in a tone so listless, that the *laquais de place* fancied persuasion only was wanting, to induce him into the usual routine of pleasures chalked out for the stranger in Paris. It accorded, in fact, very ill with the perquisite tariff of a *domestique de place*, that the traveller should limit his enjoyments to the arrangement of his fire.

"Monsieur is perhaps unaware that Mademoiselle Rachel plays to-night, in one of her best parts!" persisted the insinuating François.

“Monsieur might perhaps secure a *baignoire* even at this hour—”

He was proceeding fluently, when Greville, by way of getting rid of his importunity, bad him proceed to the *cabinet de lecture*, according to his first proposal; and before the invalid had time wholly to demolish the structure of his fire and reconstruct it on an improved principle, the *laquais de place*, with the despatch which forms the badge of all his tribe, went,—returned,—and laid before him two volumes, whose spotless yellow covers announced the last new novel.

In a moment, ere Greville could express a wish or a remonstrance, his *fauteuil à la Voltaire* was rolled to the fireside,—the folding screen placed round it for the exclusion of draughts, and the books placed side by side upon a *guéridon* near the chair. Nothing could look more tempting to an idle man, under the influence of a November rain; even though unprepared for the pleasure awaiting him in the perusal of the powerful and impassioned tale of “Gerfaut.” —

“And now, Monsieur perhaps permits me to go in search of a *baignoire* at the Français?” demanded the *laquais de place*, still fidgeting round the arm-chair into which Greville had thrown himself. To get rid of his attendance, Monsieur replied by a nod in the affirmative; feeling that having a box at his disposal did not inevitably entail upon him a visit to the theatre.

Without a hope, almost without a desire to entertain himself, did Greville, as soon as the officious slave had quitted the room, lift with a sigh of lassitude a volume from the *guéridon*, and cast his eyes languidly over the opening pages.

If the unhappy concocters of literary fiction permitted themselves to reflect upon the difficulty of detaching the imaginations of their multifarious readers from the romance of their several lives, to rivet them to the narrative of joys and sorrows purely imaginative, they would probably resign their task in despair. Yet who that ever scrutinized the operations of the human

mind, would not rather address a tale of passion to a soul agitated by impulses of passion, than to the listless egotists who, from the monotonous level of their own insignificance, contemplate even fictitious emotion with the same stupid wonder that a child gazes upon the movements of some complicated machine.

Charles de Bernard might, perhaps, have snatched his impassioned volumes from the hands of Greville, whose eyes wandered mechanically over the first vivid pages of "Gerfaut;" but the author's self-love would have been fully gratified could he have noted, three hours afterwards, the eagerness with which his courteous reader sat absorbed in the relation of events in which he had no more share than in the loves of the angels. The key-note of his feelings was touched; a new chord vibrated to the master-hand. The spell by which he had been transfixed within the circle of his own afflictions, was broken; and, like the waves of a frozen river, suddenly restored to the fulfilment of their great

purpose in creation, his thoughts flowed on, loosed from their bitter bondage.

The consciousness of release from mental thralldom, constitutes in itself a happiness for persons so susceptible as Greville. That day, he did not notice the solitariness of his dinner table. A bottle of excellent Lafitte, placed a moment upon the stove of the anteroom, to draw forth the bouquet, completed the charm; and when the zealous François announced that "*la voiture de Monsieur était avancée*" to convey him to the theatre, instead of resisting as he had predetermined, he allowed himself to be transferred to the Théâtre Français.

The aspect of so many cheerful and intelligent human beings, assembled for the same purpose as his own,—to emancipate themselves, namely, from the commonplace of life by participation in one of its more impassioned episodes,—inspired him with a sense of fellowship. After dwelling so long among tribes uncongenial as if of another species, and un-

demonstrative as statues, he found himself suddenly transported to the midst of an intellectual brotherhood, endowed with sympathies correspondent to his own.

The play began. How often had he attended dramatic representations, how often visited that very theatre, in company with those whose presence sufficed to detach his mind from all interest in what was passing on the stage ! But now, isolated and alone, he came prepared to see, to hear, to feel ; or rather, prepared for indifference,—he saw, heard, felt, ere aware that his attention was demanded.

The play was *Andromaque*. As a reader, he detested the measured pomposity of the courtly Racine ; nor was there much in the sorrows of Hector's widow, conveying an intimate appeal to his sensibilities. But as scene succeeded scene, he became conscious of the charm of beholding human nature portrayed on an ennobled scale ; and found his heart respond to lofty and generous sentiments, conveyed in elegant language

with the purest enunciation. The whole was in such chaste keeping, that his ear and eye were captivated, even to the gradual elevation of his mind. It mattered little that the Pythonic inspirations of Mademoiselle Rachel, as the representative of the frantic Hermione, failed to awake a correspondent emotion in his heart. If not touched to tears, his spirit was stirred as by the thrilling blast of a trumpet.

Greville retired to rest, that night, with his mind unburthened of a portion of its heaviness. He had been feeling *with* others *for* others. His reasoning faculties had been exercised on something beyond his peculiar distresses. Amid the impulses of life and intelligence quickening around him, he had become conscious of his own insignificance. As in the wilderness his littleness had sunk rebuked by the majesty of nature, his egotism was now crushed by the grandeur of the civilized mass,—a mass to whose sympathies he was no more than an atom of dust.

It seemed the highest presumption to magnify to himself the cares of a being so unessential to the march of human events. And thus enfranchised from his moral nightmare, he slept the sleep of one whose sensibilities had ceased to be benumbed by a dominant impression.

A wiser and a better man
He woke the morrow morn !—

CHAPTER III.

The man who feels a tendency to shrink from collision with his fellows, to run away with distaste or apprehension from the great practical business of life, does not enjoy complete moral or intellectual health,—will quickly contract a silly conceit and fastidiousness, or sink into imbecility and misanthropy. He should devoutly thank Providence for the occasion, however startling and irritating, which stirs him out of his lethargy—his cowardly lethargy,—and sends him among his fellows.

WRITER IN BLACKWOOD.

No one ever abided long among the French, without finding his intelligence stimulated by the vivacity of their impressions, and a certain inherent power of imparting them to other people. Their writers,—their talkers,—

their actors,—their public men,—their private,—are more prompt in the faculty of conveying new and startling ideas; and though the reasoning powers of the English and Germans are probably of a higher order, the machinery of their minds is so much more cumbrous, that while arranging their forces in order of battle, the French have already won the field.

The very countenances of the Parisians, though exhibiting rare traces of physical beauty, are instinct with character, intelligence, and mutability. Greville was forcibly struck by this in surveying the assemblage of faces in the pit of the Théâtre Français. Their very mode of listening and applauding, reminded him that he was in the heart of a highly-civilized metropolis. But it was not alone at the theatre. Wherever he directed his steps, his attention was kept alive by the vivid intelligence of the educated orders, and the exhilarating gaiety of the people.

“ They were right who decided Paris to be a

spot eminently auspicious to the relaxation of the mind!" said he, when at the close of a week he found that, though his business was expedited, he was still an inmate of the Hotel Voltaire, without any immediate project of departure. " Since I arrived here, I have become a different being. After all, there is truth in the adage that '*Paris est le lieu du monde où l'on peut le mieux se passer le bonheur.*' "

Had any one presumed to whisper to him that his smiling adroit *laquais de place* had usurped the privilege formerly arrogated by Fred Massingberd, of marshalling him from place to place, and instructing him in what he should eat, what he should drink, or what he should put on, Greville would perhaps have resented the imputation. But so it was. Either his philosophy was become so epicurean as to find enjoyment in non-resistance, or abstraction of mind rendered him as ready a tool as formerly timidity and indolence; for he was almost grateful to the shrewd but good-humoured

François, who took so much trouble off his hands.

The admirable breakfast smoking on the table at precisely the right moment, with the *feuilletons* of the day lying open beside the *pâté de foie gras*, or *hure de Troyes*; — the *recherché* little dinner, prepared in a warm and well-lighted *cabinet particulier* of the best *restaurant* in the neighbourhood of the theatre he had pointed out at breakfast for his evening's recreation; — his *lorgnette* and a copy of the *entr'acte*, presented on the threshold of his *loge d'avant-scène*; — his *sorbet*, or iced orgeat, awaiting him on his return home; — a constant supply of new books, engravings, and caricatures, seemed, day after day, to anticipate his whims and wishes. For François, having discovered that his new proprietor was rich and generous, was of opinion that wealth and liberality entitled him to be *désennuyé* by all the means at the disposal of that harlequin of social life, a Parisian *laquais de place*! —

On the nights when the *Académie Royale* was about to develope its legions of sylphs or squadrons of kettle-drums, a *petit couvert*, enhanced by all the *primeurs* in season because out of season, awaited him at the *Café de Paris*. For the *Gymnase*, *Variétés* or *Vaudeville*, a *diner de fantaisie* at the *Café Anglais* or *Lemardelays* prepared the way ;—for the wild melodramas of *Porte St. Martin*, the substantial buffet of the *Cadran Bleu*.—When a box was engaged for him at the brilliant little theatres of the *Opera Comique*, or *Salle Ventadour*, he usually found his carriage drive up to that renowned temple of gastronomy the *Rocher de Cancale*, (whose fish courses so far eclipse those of *Lovegrove* ;) while the *Théâtre Français* was preceded by the excellent *cuisine* of *Véry*, or the exquisite cellar of the *Frères Provençans*.—The *Café de Périgord* or *Grand Vatel* served up their appetizing *petits plats* previous to the equally piquant *petites pièces* of the *Théâtre du Palais Royal*.—

It was only on the nights sacred to the Italian Opera, that François allowed Monsieur to follow his own devices and dine at home; either because his *laquais de place* was sufficiently *du bon ton* to conceive that more than ordinary *recueillement* was indispensable for the enjoyment of Grisi's and Rubini's enchanting cadences; or on account of the greater refinement of toilet indispensable to the spot. But it was rare indeed that Greville proposed a visit *aux Italiens*. Dreading the chances of recognition to which he was exposed in so fashionable an audience, he preferred the lively representations of the minor French theatres, as imposing less restraint on his attention. The enthralling interest excited by such artists as Bouffé and Ferville, Madame Volnys, or Madame Albert, experienced an agreeable relief from the witty audacity of Dejazet, the drolleries of Numa, or the dramatic tact of Frédéric Lemaitre; while the sparkling gaiety of Scribe or Bayard seemed to acquire a new charm, after

the excitement produced by the impressive dramas of Hugo and Alexandre Dumas.

Every night, in short, he visited some theatre, down to the grotesque pantomimes of Debureau and the sprightly epigrams in action of the Panthéon ;—or rather, every night, *il se laissait transporter* to the theatre that promised best for his amusement, or that François promised loudest should amuse him. It was as easy to enjoy his reveries reclining in his private box, as in his chimney-corner ; and those reveries assumed a less lugubrious complexion when indulged amid a multitude of cheerful faces, than in a lonely chamber, whose very stillness inspires compunction. Ever in crowds, yet ever alone, the pre-occupation of his mind prevented him from becoming conscious of that isolation “amid the hum, the stir, the shock of men,” so powerfully described by Byron, and so strongly felt by all the world.

With strange good fortune, he escaped accidental collision with his Parisian acquaintances

during a whole month's enjoyment of the amusements assigned to him by the provident François. Though Christmas was at hand, his Faubourg friends were still settled at their country seats, absorbed in the pleasures of the chase. He had noted that his favourite hotels in the Rue St. Dominique and Rue de Varennes remained closed ; and it was a relief to know their inmates still at a distance, for though he never went out on foot, (the streets of the Faubourg being untraversable in winter, unless as a matter of necessity,) he felt that to encounter them would be too great a trial for the infirm state of his health and spirits.

To the family of Rostanges, more particularly, his explanations must be of a nature he scarcely dared contemplate. To that letter,—that touching letter, addressed to him by Sophie,—he had never deigned an answer !—It was impossible to write without sinning against candour ; and he preferred leaving Madame de Rostanges to the supposition that her letter had miscarried. In

the event of her having made subsequent inquiries, she must have learned his voyage to the east; and was probably satisfied that the communication so nearly regarding his happiness and that of her sister, had never reached his hands. What was the result?—He knew not,—he scarcely dared conjecture!—Since it was decreed that he must never become the husband of Eugénie, better that her very existence should be unknown to him,—that her name should never more be pronounced in his presence,—that her image should be uprooted from his heart!—

But it is because nature revolts against such outrages upon her decrees, that Greville's life had nearly fallen a sacrifice to the effort. From the moment he had resolved to banish Eugénie de Nangis from his recollection, the extent of her power over his feelings had become only too cruelly demonstrated. The touchstone once applied, he found that she was inextricably intermingled with his hopes of happiness. Still,

though his health had sunk under the trial, he adhered to his resolution, and had attempted no further intercourse with the family. During his sojourn in the east, indeed, such forbearance was not difficult; but now that he was once more in France,—once more in Paris,—it required some self-command to refrain from all inquiry concerning the family.

On one occasion, however, immediately after his arrival, gratuitous information had been afforded him. As he passed one morning the *Magazin* of Madame Adde, he almost involuntarily pulled the check-string, and inquired for a gardenia. A demand so unusual at that season of the year, brought *la mère des lions* to the carriage to make her excuses in person.

“ Ah ! I thought it must be one of my old customers ! ”—cried she, instantly recognising him. “ I am scarcely ever asked for a gardenia, milor, without recollecting the time (two years ago, I think ?) when you used to buy them of me *à poids d’or* ! ”

Then, after expressing her regrets at being unfurnished with his favourite flower, the *bouquetière* proceeded, by a transition only too natural, to speak of Madame la Marquise de Restanges.

“ The family have furnished themselves here ever since,” said she. “ But they are absent now. They will not be in Paris, I dare say, before the end of January. By that time, Mademoiselle’s marriage will have taken place. The families of Chaulieu and Monthémont are staying at Les Etangs. You must remember the bridegroom, milor ?—*ce gros brun*,—the Count Tristan de Sévron.—Is there nothing besides a gardenia with which I can have the honour of serving milor this morning ? — A double Spanish jessamine approaches nearest to it.”

A double Spanish jessamine was accordingly purchased, in repayment for the civility of the courteous Madame Adde ;—and Greville returned home that day so much more dispirited than usual, that it rejoiced the heart of François

to recollect that a new ballet was to be performed at the opera, with the piquant Elssler for its heroine. It was in vain that his master protested against going, and complained of indisposition.

“ *Monsieur verra bien que cette petite distraction va dissiper sa migraine!*” persisted the *laquais de place*; and Greville felt that it would be less troublesome to ensconce himself in the seclusion of his quiet *baignoire* than be exposed all the evening to the *tisannes de tilleul ou de violette*, and other small’potables with which François would be sure to inundate his headache.

Though annoyed by the accuracy with which his changes of health and humour were noted by this assiduous slave, it was impossible not to be grateful for the zeal with which, whenever he seemed depressed, as in the present instance, some rare dish or choice wine was placed before him at dinner, to coax him into better sorts. Greville was perhaps, of all men living, the least susceptible to the plea-

tures of the table. Still, he ascended the steps in the Rue Lepelletier that night with all the better grace, for the few glasses of admirable Clos de Vougeot and the cup of clear and scalding coffee, in which François had taken care to steep the cares of his noble master. He was even pleased with the anticipation of three hours of complete seclusion, with a brilliant pageant passing before his eyes.

Just, however, as he was extending his hand to receive, at the foot of the stairs, the printed program of the new ballet, he found it uncere- moniously seized and cordially shaken ; and lo ! turning round in utter discomposure at the interruption, found himself addressed by the young and handsome Prince de J——, the sailor son of the King.

In a moment, the instinctive high breeding of Greville, like the sun bursting through a mist, dispelled the clouds from his countenance, while replying to the friendly inquiries of the warm-hearted young prince, with whom at

Alexandria he had formed a somewhat close intimacy. Luckily, no apologies were needful for having failed to make known to his Royal Highness his sojourn in Paris, the Prince himself having only arrived the preceding day from his duties on a foreign station.

“ I am overwhelmed with business on my return home after so long an absence,” said he, with another parting shake of the hand ; “ but as soon as I can disengage myself, my dear Lord Greville, we must meet, to talk over our pleasures of the East.—*A revoir.*”

Lord Greville shrugged his shoulders with vexation as he proceeded along the corridor to his snug box next the *avant scènes*. His first notion was to quit Paris the following day ; his next, to congratulate himself on the improbability that, amid the anxieties of his public career and the pleasures of rejoining his family, the Prince should so much as recall to mind their chance encounter. His terror of being dragged into notice through the condescensions

of royalty consequently interfered little with his delight in the brilliant piquancy of the charming Elssler, or the striking tableaux of which she formed the centre.

It is in vain we protest against the unintellectuality of dancing as a source of enjoyment ! There is probably no dramatic representation which carries away the audience like a good ballet, — the highest effort of the genius of materialism. — It imposes no tax on the attention, — it awakens no unpleasant associations, — it is a spectacle for which experience suggests no antecedents. When once the imagination is taken prisoner by the brilliant phantasm, we luxuriate in the gratification afforded to our eyes, as we enjoy the transient brightness of a dream, the meridian of a day *sans veille ni lendemain*. Dull indeed must be the spectator who can view without interest such chef-d'œuvres as “Faust,” or “Masiello.” Even the Americans were exalted above their matter-of-fact nature by the graces

of Elssler;—even Lord Greville returned that night to his hotel haunted by bright visions of grace and beauty, and murmuring the sprightly measure of the Cracovienne.

On the morrow, the carriage was announced to him immediately after breakfast; and from the air with which the *laquais de place* held out his hat and gloves, he saw that it was intended he should go out.

“Milor probably forgets,” suggested François, who, from the adventure of the preceding night had obtained an insight into the rank of his master, and from the regard testified towards him by a prince of the blood, perhaps some little accession of personal respect, — “Milor probably forgets that it was for this day I obtained him a ticket of admission to the Hotel du Archives?”—

And Greville, who had simply authorized the measure to get rid of the subject, now confirmed his act of submission by suffering himself to be driven through the filthiest part of the ancient

city of Paris; through streets scarcely capable of admitting a carriage, towards a neighbourhood as completely *terra incognita* to the fashionable world as the narrowest lane of Lothbury to the countesses of May Fair.

It was in the heart of this unenviable quarter, however, that he espied the peaked roof of a gatehouse (erected by the Connétable de Clisson, on the model of his famous ancestral château,) attached to the more modern Hotel de Soubise, which, only a century ago, formed the centre of attraction to the fashionables of Paris, as the successive residence of the powerful families of Guise and Rohan;—of which the latter took for its motto the haughty device—“*Roi ne peux,—Prince ne daigne,—Rohan je suis!*”—and the former, the still more audacious task of the indoctrinization of kings!

Like our own Montagu House, the ill-situated palace is now appropriately converted into a national museum, as a depository for the archives of France.

“ No wonder that so princely a mansion should have become the property of government !” mused Lord Greville, as he ascended the damp but splendid staircase. “ The race of *grand seigneurs*, such as the Princes de Soubise and Guemenée, was extinguished by the Code Napoleon ; and the capital, relieved from the demoralizing influence of their excesses, must content itself to resign the spectacle of their domestic magnificence.”

It was in vain that François stepped forward with his cut-and-dry *laquais-de-place* exposition of the importance of the institution,—another of the national bequests of the imperial reparator of royal oversights. Greville was of an age to experience stronger interest in those deserted galleries and echoing chambers, than in the green *cartons* containing the confiscated papers of Fieschi, Mallet, and other defeated conspirators against the successive governments of France. Even the insignia of those more comprehensive conspiracies, yclept Treaties of

Peace and Commerce,—(though enriched with the signets and signatures of the sovereigns of all times and countries, from le bon roi Dagobert, down to Maria de Gloria, and including the seven dangling seals of the Helvetic provinces and one authoritative signet of Great Britain;) — even the autographs of Suger and Sully,—the bad spelling of *le bon Henri*, and the mean policy of Louis le Grand,—even the charters granted by Childebert and Clovis to royal abbeys destined to be survived by these fragile records of their privileges and immunities,—interested him less than the fatal window whence St. Mégrin, the victim of a chivalric gallantry, precipitated himself into the street from the boudoir of Catherine of Cleves, on the approach of her stern husband, Henri de Guise.

The *laquais de place*, enchanted to perceive from the countenance of Greville (by the study of which he realized so many hundred francs per month,) that Milor was interested by the scene he was surveying, recommenced his professional

routine by explaining that the museum contained eighty thousand cases of the archives of France, carefully classed and numbered. Milor seemed to attach less value to these dry materials of history, than to the truly incongruous catacombs in which the reliques are interred;—galleries, whose flooring bears traces of the metallic arabesques once adorning their parquets of buhl;—doorways, lavishly adorned by the graceful pencil of Boucher with legions of those ever-smiling Cupids, of which the Love-loving artist has bequeathed so prolific a family to France.

To turn from these smiling faces to the iron chest of the national assembly, with its heterogeneous treasure of golden bulls,—keys of the Bastille,—the plate of the assignats,—the autograph will of Louis XIV., and the autograph letter from Napoleon to Louis XVIII.,—appeared to Greville a bitter irony upon the futility of sublunary things and sublunary kings.

In the circular saloon forming a centre to the radius of the *appartement d'honneur*, he almost

expected to behold the belles of the court of Louis XV., in hoop and powder, feathers and brocade, advance to welcome the descendant of *le beau Grévil*, the idol of their spangled coteries; for the Hotel de Soubise,—appropriated during the earlier years of the government of Napoleon as an asylum for noble families returning from emigration, ruined by the revolution,—exists, almost in its primitive state; as when the resort of all that was gay and dissolute in the court of that gayest and most dissolute of French kings,—*celui qui a inventé la poudre*.

Something, however, in the atmosphere or aspect of the desolate place, struck a chill to the heart of Greville. On all sides, instead of tripping courtiers and lovely women,—papers!—dusty, mouldering chronicles of feats forgotten and individuals commingled with the dust,—on all sides, nothing but the past:—the feuds and fights, peculations and policies of twelve centuries, enclosed in a beggarly account of paste-board boxes;—the collective wisdom of all the

Talleyrands of Europe shrunk within a few shrivelled parchments !—Right glad was he to escape from the heavy atmosphere of the uninhabited chambers to the gardens of the hotel, cheered by the open light of day !—

Fain would François have beguiled him into a survey of another of the lions of that remote quarter ; a mansion, affording the type of the residence of a *président* of the fifteenth century, and rich in historical associations as the spot where Voltaire planned his *Henriade*, and Napoleon, after his flight from Waterloo, learned from the lips of Count Montalivet his decree of downfall,—the Hotel de Lambert, in the Isle St. Louis. Though now degraded into a military storehouse, the gallery, painted by Lebrun, exhibits, in its rich cornices and brackets, and the fine designs of its ceiling, models for the modern decorator ; while the view of the river commanded by its balconies, has been renowned as unique in Paris, from the days of Tallemant des Réaux to those

of Dulaure. Yet in spite of the elaborate panegyric of poor François upon its beautiful staircase, and scroll work of pierced granite, which he protested had afforded a Jacob's ladder to the angelic maids of honour of the Reine Blanche, Greville resisted.

"Home!"—was his imperative order as he re-entered the carriage;—dictated, however, by some luckless presentiment; for on entering the Rue de Bellechasse, he found it stop suddenly, while a friendly, though unfamiliar voice accosted him by name.

"I have just been to visit you at your hotel," cried the Prince de J——, bringing his cabriolet up with Greville's remise. "Remember I shall be at home at twelve to-morrow, and enchanted to receive you."

To turn a deaf ear to such an invitation was impossible. On the morrow, he breakfasted with the young Prince, in his *appartement de garçon*, at the Tuileries, with a few young men of his own age,—professional or college

friends,—and one or two of graver years, attached to his household. Greville recalled to mind with pleasure the warm praises he had heard, even among the bitterest of his Carlist friends, of the family of Louis Philippe; and was gratified to find himself welcomed with cordial, though high-bred courtesy, by the royal sailor who had evinced such generous interest in his precarious condition at Alexandria.

A presentation at court was now inevitable; and a kind and friendly reception as inevitable as the presentation. The name and connexions of the Earl of Greville were familiarly known to a king who seems to possess the all but universal knowledge indispensable to a crowned head; and an invitation to dine at the Tuileries introduced him, a few days afterwards, into the bosom of a family, which, even in private life, would be signalized by its worth, accomplishments, and personal distinctions.

It was fortunate for Greville that, when

questioned by the king concerning his former visit to Paris, the residence of the court at Neuilly at that season of the year afforded a pretext for not having sought a presentation from his ambassador. He had less excuse when, in replying to his Majesty's gracious interrogations, he was obliged to avow his ignorance of the public monuments and institutions of Paris.

“Joinville must conduct you over the Egyptian and Naval Museum at the Louvre,” said the King, with the affability which becomes kindness when testified towards a young man by a sovereign advanced in years ;—and while proceeding to enlarge upon the recent acquisitions of these national depositories, Greville could not fail to be impressed by the extent of information, as well as by the lucidity of mind, imparting sterling value to the conversation of one superadding to the careful education attending the first subject in the realm, the varied experience attending the first throne of the Continent.

Amid the society assembled at the royal table, he had an opportunity of nearly approaching certain of the leading politicians of France, whom hitherto he had beheld only in the throng of diplomatic soirées, where it was more incumbent to exhibit their orders and *crachats*, than make proof of their intellects or opinions. He now learned to appreciate the fluent aptitude of Thiers, the classical elegance of Mignet, the universality of Passy, the bland perspicacity of the Duc Decazes.

His previous opinion of several of these eminent men had been prejudiced by the virulence of party journalism, attacking, as untrue to their early principles, those whose conduct in public life was influenced rather by love of their country than attachment to the throne; while of others, his judgment was grounded upon their published works,—manifestos of principle or standards of capacity which a statesman is pretty sure to repent having placed in the hands of an envious world. He now heard them en-

gaged in brilliant but unaffected conversation, excited rather than dominated by the presence of the master-spirit.

The military illustrations of the era were also assembled in the royal circle. Among them, Soult, even in the decadence of old age a pillar of strength to the new dynasty; though his groundless popularity in a foreign country has proved so equally groundless an injury in his own. In addition to these military and political illustrations of the day, many names of the highest aristocracy, the Chabots, La Tour du Pins, La Tremouilles, St. Aldégondes, St. Aulaires, Castellanes,—were successively announced in the presence chamber of the King.—

The tone of the Court, which he had heard so absurdly contemned by the coterie of the Hotel de St. Pierre, struck him as more than unexceptionable. An air of majesty, tempered by the influence of every womanly excellence, enchanted him in the queen, as enhancing the more guarded, though scarcely less gracious,

courtesies of her daughters-in-law ;—while the countenance of the Princess Clémentine, so characteristic of her Bourbon origin as to recall the memorable profile of the gentle and unfortunate Madame Elisabeth, completed the charm arising from his previous acquaintance with the three elder princes,—by admission of all parties, the most accomplished gentlemen in France. The royal circle, one of the least constrained, because one of the most enlightened of royal circles, might be cited as a model for the purlieus of the courts of kings.

One member of the royal family, however,—“the crowning rose of the whole wreath,”—had been snatched away a year previous to the introduction of Greville into its circle. From the Prince de J—— he had learned to estimate the excellence of the gifted Marie ; but it was now, in a spot sacred to her memory, that he obtained a just estimation of her talents. The chef-d’œuvre, so unostentatiously occupying a subordinate place in the gallery at Versailles,

the most imaginative of all creations of modern sculpture, scarcely struck him so much as two designs, disfigured by the faults, but marked with the genius of a first inspiration ; representing the Pilgrim of Schiller, and an Angel weeping at the gates of Paradise. A yet bolder flight of imagination, developed in an equestrian figure of Jeanne d'Arc surveying, with feelings of mingled compunction and heroism, the body of the first human being slain by her hand, struck him almost with awe, as contrasted with a portrait of the young Princess adorning the chamber ;—a portrait in which, disarrayed of the pomps of royalty and attired in the simple blouse of an artist, she is represented by the pencil of her master, Scheffer, with the holy tenderness due to the noblest of the children of art !—

“ Let who will be invested with the unquiet sovereignty of the French nation,” thought Greville, as from the sanctuary wherein he had been admitted to a view of these mournful me-

mentos of early genius, he emerged into the brilliant saloon where the King, surrounded by his fine family, was engaged in earnest conversation with a knot of the master-spirits of his realm,—“it is something to be the father of such children!”—

“Milor will doubtless pay his respects to their Majesties on New Year’s Day?—*D’abord c’est indispensable!*”—observed François to the lord and master whom he governed, on the day succeeding the royal dinner party. “Every individual in Paris admitted to the honours of the Court, appears at the Tuileries on the *jour de l’an*. The first night’s reception is assigned to the official bodies and corps diplomatique;—on the second, the King and Queen are approachable for general visits and presentations.”

That such an effort was inevitable, Greville had already ascertained at the Embassy; where he had presented himself immediately on his arrival, and received all the aid and encourage-

ment in the Amazzi business, compatible with the ends of public justice.

But if he repaired thither in the first instance for the furtherance of selfish objects, he returned for the enjoyment of congenial society, the moment improved health and spirits quickened the icy current of his blood. The dread of encountering his Carlist friends in a circle open to all parties, was the only obstacle to his happiness in a circle distinguished by the gentler suavities of life. But no sooner had a hasty glance round the circle assembled at the Embassy, satisfied him that it contained no face on which it was painful to him to look, than he resigned himself to genuine enjoyment of the brilliancy of a scene, how different from the vapid monotony of the dimly-lighted London soirées!—

Often, as he fixed his admiring gaze upon the groups collected on and around the crimson ottoman of the chamber opening to the angle of

the conservatory adjoining the ball-room, he fancied he beheld one of the courtly interiors of Watteau, realized by the charms of those Parisiennes of the *grand monde*, who impart grace to the fanciful attires of fashion that serve only to disfigure the women of other nations. The easy pleasantry never expanding into familiarity,—the affability never impertinently condescending,—the *prévenance* never too emphatic,—the high-breeding, in short, of those whose graces dignify high birth in many of the historical names of both the new court and the old, never struck him more forcibly than when developed in the saloon of l'Ambassade d'Angleterre. There, none of the mistrust which so often imparts gêne to a diplomatic circle. There, a momentary oblivion to political discordance. The word party seemed obliterated from all languages on passing the threshold.

But though aware that the family of Rostanges would, for nearly a month to come, remain at Les Etangs, Greville felt that the soirées

at the Embassy would soon become an interdicted pleasure. The Faubourg was rapidly reassembling its chosen coterie. Another week, and he must recede from their approach.

Sometimes, indeed, he reproached himself with the prolongation of his sojourn in Paris; more especially for not having taken his departure the moment his encounter with the Prince de J—— re-entangled him in the toils of the great world. Yet at the moment, so hurried an escape seemed impossible. So finely spun are the chains of etiquette which form the bondage of such circles, that though at the moment apparently strong as iron, no sooner is the crisis past which gave them force, than the eye of reason perceives that a breath had been sufficient to dissolve them and extricate the prisoner.— Yet the same crisis, again recurring, would find him again a slave!—

New Year's Day, that epoch of national generosity and rejoicing, now made its appearance, ushered in by the usual showers of bon-

bons. Unaccustomed to the forms of the day, Greville drove out as usual, prepared only to find the shops of Paris more gay and glittering than ordinary. But the throngs of animated human beings accosting each other in every street with salutations of friendship, or the warmth of kindred, struck him with so accusing a sense of his own isolation, that he hurried home again. His solitary chamber was less lonely than the crowd. Snatching up a book, he tried to invest his sympathies in fictitious interests.—In vain!—The spell of the hour was upon him. He wanted truth,—he wanted reality.—At such a season, chairs should be drawn round the fireside,—kindly words exchanged,—fond recollections indulged.—The birthday of the year is of all birthdays the most apt to revivify the pulses of dormant affection.

As if to cherish his griefs, he chose to dine at home,—he chose to dine alone.—François, whose humble offering of an orange-tree garnished with *immortelles* had been so graciously

received that morning as to encourage the belief that he was a favourite, vainly reminded him, from half hour to half hour, that it was time to dress for court. Satisfied that, not having to escort a lady to the Tuileries for whom it would be expedient to secure a seat, there could be no occasion for his appearing early in the throng, he deferred the operation of dressing so late, as to place his *remise* nearly the last on the long file of carriages proceeding to the château.

The extensive façade of the fine and quaint old palace,—the most characteristic of the public buildings of Paris,—looked gay and inviting from the brilliancy of light streaming from its multitude of windows; and as Greville ascended the majestic staircase, he felt as if approaching the presence of royalty by an appropriately royal avenue. The fine gallery of Louis Philippe was crowded with beautiful women in all the gorgeousness of courtly array; and the Salle des Maréchaux, and several suc-

ceeding chambers towards the throne-room, were lined with a similar display. Diamonds sparkled on every side; and the richest attires of modern fashion enhanced the loveliness of fair creatures of all nations and languages, to each of whom the royal family were addressing in turn some word of courteous greeting.

Amid the crowd of men, accoutred in military, diplomatic, or professional uniforms, occupying the centre of the different chambers, Greville trusted to pass unnoticed, till the King, after paying his compliments to his female guests, should withdraw as usual into the presence-chamber to receive his levee. He had even accomplished his task as far as to attain the *Salle des Maréchaux*, and accord his tribute of admiration to the brilliancy of that unrivalled hall, when a sudden and sickening consciousness came over him.

What business had he there at such a time?

What business had *he*,—the illegitimate,—the

impostor,—to figure at the court of the King of the French as lawful representative of one of the ancient peerages of Great Britain ?

A mist appeared to dazzle his eyes as the idea suddenly presented itself to his mind !—Recognised by many of his fair countrywomen,—forced to return the eager salutations of the Macmichaels and Ebsworths, and trembling lest further civilities should be in store for him,—it was this re-association with the petty world of the coteries, which suddenly renewed the overpowering sense of his position !

Already he was hastening back through the gaudy multitude as rapidly as the obstructions of politeness would permit, when, at the lower end of the gallery, at that moment comparatively deserted by the officers crowding towards the spot where the Queen, escorted by her ladies, was engaged in receiving presentations, the clank of military accoutrements apprized him that some person was following closely in his rear. A moment afterwards, he found himself

familiarly accosted by name. The person of his intimate friend was, however, as strange as his voice; being that of a gay colonel of cuirassiers, fine with the finery of a new uniform, padded into the usual military caricature of the human form divine. Greville had hustled about the world sufficiently to acquire intimates of all countries and degrees; but by no possible effort could he recal to mind the individual by whom he was hailed so cavalierly. There was something almost Irish in the dauntlessness with which the stranger persisted in the familiarity of his address, to one who had evidently no recollection of his person.

“It is an age since I had the honour to possess you as an inmate, my dear Lord!”—cried he, on relinquishing the hand which had passively submitted to be shaken. “But, though a little the worse for wear, I knew you directly;—not altogether the worse, though,—for you are a trifle broader about the shoulders, and a trifle

less missish about the chin !—You hold yourself better too, which is not to be wondered at, since I perceive that, in the interim, you have embarked in the profession.”

“You are mistaken, Sir; this is not the badge of military service,” replied Greville, glancing a moment at his deputy-lieutenant’s uniform, and assuming an air which he had seldom known fail to put people in their place.

“A civil uniform, eh?—Well, well, you really need not look ashamed of it, among the strange apings of soldiership one sees here !”—said the unknown, shrugging his shoulders as he glanced contemptuously at the worsted epaulettes of a group of national guardsmen, engaged in friendly chat at no great distance.—“Did you ever see such *épiciers* ?”—

“I see some very fine men, belonging, I believe, to a very valuable corps,” replied Greville, coldly.

“Valuable?—Bah ! So is the *gendarmerie*,—

I beg its pardon,—the municipal guard,—but one does not exactly expect to run against it in the palace of the sovereign.”

“It is not always easy to conjecture against what one may run!”—replied Greville, almost irritated.

“Ha! ha! ha!—No! as you say, one finds oneself strangely mystified in a *topu bohn* such as this!—*Mais que voulez vous?*—One of the duties of a public man, now-a-days, is *de s’encanailler!*—*La patrie avant tout!*—

Something in the stranger’s mode of drawing up with the *rengorgement* of a pouting pigeon, as he uttered these words, suddenly recalled to Greville’s mind his host of the Château de Grangeneuve!—But the Carlist colonel at the Tuileries!—The man who, at Dôle, he had overheard utter such vehement execrations against the reigning dynasty, a courtier to Louis Philippe!—His amazement was probably painted in his face!—

“ I don’t wonder you are surprised to see me here !” cried Colonel d’Aramon. “ It almost surprises myself. But people of strong minds take strong resolutions. Finding that the lapse of years served only to confirm the stability of a government which shocked me principally by a presentiment of its *instability*, I judged it a matter of duty to present my services to the throne, like every other right-thinking *enfant de la patrie*; and Louis Philippe has now no subject more devoted than your humble servant.”

It was not the first time Lord Greville had found occasion to compassionate the King of the French, for the nature and complexion of his subjects’ loyalty; but how could he be otherwise than forbearing with the cousin of Eugénie?—

“ I rarely examine the root of a tree which brings forth good fruits,” he replied, with a courteous bow;—“ being too much the friend

of public order not to rejoice when I see honourable men, from whatever cause, augmenting the ranks of government.”

“ I have heard so much,—so very much of you, my dear Lord, since we parted at Grange-neuve !”—cried the Colonel,—an effusion of deeper red upon whose bronzed cheeks, seemed to indicate that Greville was speaking daggers to him,—“ that is, such praises,—that you must pardon me for having thus unceremoniously claimed your acqu’tance. *Dainailleurs*, as you may well conceive, I do not know twenty people here to-night, and am only too happy to find *une figure de connoissance !*”

The mortifying drawback contained in the last phrase, was lost upon Lord Greville ; who, with pardonable weakness, concluded that it was from his fair kinswomen, d’Aramon must have received flattering testimonials in his favour. He almost began to see something manly and soldierlike in the rough bearing of the colonel of cuirassiers :—

“ My poor tenant, Caudebec, whom you enabled to renew his lease with me after the reparation of the mischief done by that accursed fire,” resumed d’Aramon, twisting his mustachios, “ is constantly chaunting the praises of the generous English lord, who threw about his thousand-franc notes and hazarded his precious life, as if neither of them were worth a pebble-stone !”—

“ And the Marquis de Rostanges ?” impatiently demanded Greville,—excusing the inquiry to his conscience, on the ground of eagerness to escape the recital of his own merits.

“ The Marquis de Rostanges,” repeated d’Aramon,—his broad unmeaning countenance suddenly contracting—“ is, I believe, in Normandy.” And though the inquiry had elicited no information new to Greville, the result was so far advantageous, that on this slight mention of the name of Rostanges, the Colonel instantly relinquished his button, and made a formal parting bow. That his sudden reserve arose

from knowledge of the resentment entertained by his gentle cousins against the man who had conducted himself towards them with such cruel ungraciousness, Lord Greville nothing doubted ; the egotism of frail human nature forbidding him to conjecture that d'Aramon's disinclination to talk about the family, might originate in wrongs and resentments of his own. Thus left at liberty to accomplish his escape from the gallery, overheated by its prodigality of lights, Greville lost no further time in seeking his carriage.

But this chance encounter with the recanted Carlist, proved a serious advantage, by directing the current of his thoughts into a new channel. As he drove homewards, after long entanglement in the file of carriages still arriving through the *guichet*, the frantic protestations of legitimatism poured forth by d'Aramon at Dôle, recurred with redoubled force to his mind ; and the contempt inspired by the infirmity of purpose of another, who, after affecting

such lofty demonstrations of loyalty, (the most chivalric of all the virtues of civilization,) had sunk into a mercenary,—“a *bisognon* base,”—lessened, if it did not efface, the scorn inspired by inconsistencies of his own.

CHAPTER IV.

C'était une belle et douce vie ;—les jours s'écoulaient rapides au milieu de ces triomphes.

H. ARNAUD.

THE carnival had now commenced,—the season set in ;—and the social brilliancy of Paris was at its brightest. That unique and many-coloured public, composed of all that is opulent or aristocratic of the various countries of Europe, hurrying to enjoy at their source the sparkling waters of the fountain of Pleasure, was displaying its gaudy plumage in the factitious sunshine ;—or, in simple English, crowding the ball-rooms of Paris, and filling its coffers.

Happy city!—for the purchase of whose gewgaws, people are content to exhaust the mines,—reap the harvests,—despoil the forests,—and wring sweat from the brows of the serfs of their native soil!—Happy city! where people who are sad or sorry elsewhere, come to fling down the burthen of their woes!—

Every night, some gay assembly gathered together the congregation of the great. The diplomatic circles displayed, as usual, the collective wisdom of their bald heads and sallow faces, and the brightness of their constellations of stars;—*élite* of the *haute noblesse* of civilized Europe!—affording the most agreeable society, and constituting the galvanic battery whence emanates an electric chain encircling the destinies of mankind.—To resist the attraction of such a coterie, was difficult even for Greville; a coterie wherein no one is expected to exhibit a particle of his individual self; but where he may figure agreeably, conventionalized into a polished brick of the grand temple of European

intelligence, whereof diplomatists may be considered the connecting corner-stones.

To the dull, weekly ministerial soirées, or receptions, usually composed of fifty place-holders and two hundred place-seekers, with a dozen or two of ladies, chiefly old or ugly, connected with the *corps administratif* by ties actual or anticipatory,—succeeded those splendid balls, which the government of France, whether consular, imperial, royal, or civic, has invariably exacted of the administrators placed in authority over that dancing nation:—the *mot* of Talleyrand, concerning the Congress of Vienna, that “*Le congrès dansait mais ne marchait pas*,” being applicable to the two Chambers, in almost every January of successive years.

In vain did Greville forswear participation in these noisy pleasures. Among those who had furthered the object of his visit to Paris, was a veteran connected with the *ministère de la marine*, the Contre Amiral de Valsan, with

whom he had subsequently formed a more intimate acquaintance at the Château. Unaware of Greville's motives for absenting himself from society, the kind old man not only introduced him into the circle of his family connexions, but procured him a shower of ministerial invitations; as well as the services as master of the ceremonies of his own son,—by vocation an *élégant* of the *monde administratif*, and by profession an auditor of the *Conseil d'état*.

“At least, condescend to take a passing survey of our ministerial circles,” remonstrated Ferdinand de Valsan, in reply to the pretexts by which Greville sought to excuse himself. “As a foreigner, it is your privilege to appear, without compromising yourself, in every society;—as a cosmopolite, (all travellers, now a-days, are, or pretend to be, cosmopolites,) you owe it to yourself to examine the coteries of *la jeune France*, as you have already done those of *la France fossile*.”

“I fear I have neither health nor spirits for

young anything !” —replied Greville, with a smile, “and have consequently withdrawn from all contact with the fête-giving world.”

“ Ministerial fêtes may be supposed to give themselves,” replied Valsan. “In frequenting them, you contract no obligation,—not even that of being amused.—Out of health and spirits?—*Ciel!* what would I not give to possess such qualifications,”—cried the light-hearted young man. “A genteel melancholy is just now the very thing to render a man irresistible. With the aid of a jaundiced complexion, hollow eyes, and a genius for sighing, I would undertake to extinguish with vexation every *dandy* most in vogue !—I envy you !”

“You are fortunate in the intactness of heart and constitution which enables you to jest upon physical and mental suffering,” said Greville, coldly.

“*Pardon!*—a thousand times pardon, if I have annoyed you !”—said young Valsan, earnestly. “To own the truth, I thought you were devising

pretexts for avoiding my sister's ball to-night. It is true the hotel of the Home Department lies so distant from our meridian of the Chaussée d'Antin, as to render a journey thither almost as magnanimous an act of devotion as a pilgrimage to Jerusalem,—being in the very heart of the enemy's camp,—of the Faubourg St. Germain.—Nevertheless, I hope to entice you thither. Céline, who is a desperate Anglomane, will never forgive me if I fail to procure her the presence of Lord Greville, the idol of the Tuileries, and her *beau idéal* of *le Grand Seigneur d'Angleterre*.”—

Notwithstanding this florid compliment, Madame Clermont de Thorigny, the wife of the *Ministre de l'Intérieur*, was an Anglomane no further than regarded Honiton lace or Salisbury scissars; and scarcely knew by sight the young English lord presented by her brother. But Valsan had justly calculated upon the weakness of human nature,—especially human nature in the guise of a handsome young man of three-and-

twenty; and was anxious to introduce so attractive a person into the routine of the ministerial soirées.

There was something in Greville's gentle manners and graceful person, peculiarly fascinating to the French. They admired in his address the total absence of pretension, so common in young Englishmen of his caste; and as it necessarily happens that foreigners of distinction visiting Paris attach themselves to the society of the Faubourg, where parity of means and habits ensures congeniality of pursuits, it is rare for the coteries of the Chaussée d'Antin or the *bureau cratie*, to welcome into their set the *haute noblesse* of other countries. If sometimes allured into one of their gaudy saloons, the Russian Princess or Austrian Count is pretty sure to pronounce that it contains "*pas un chat de connoissance*," and return no more.

Unable, for instance, to withstand the flattering instances of Ferdinand de Valsan, Greville consented to accompany him that night to

the ministerial ball; and if proud of the whispers that greeted their entrance concerning the presentment of *le bel Anglais*, Valsan was no less gratified by Greville's genuine tribute of admiration to the brilliancy of the fête, and the loveliness of its female guests.

The science of ball-giving is so universally understood in France, that, at a day's notice, the art of the decorator will transform a suite of barns into elegant and well-lighted apartments; and let the gravest and most untowardly of mankind be honoured by government with a ministerial *portefeuille*, the dancing public is satisfied that his fêtes in the month of January will be all that it has a right to exact from a member of the cabinet.—But the hotel of the *Ministre de l'Intérieur* is anything but a series of barns; and Monsieur and Madame Clermont de Thorigny, if their name be unknown to the records of Hozier, or any other almanack than the *Almanac de la Cour*, were neither very untowardly nor particularly grave.

It was the first time Greville had found himself in the circle of the Chaussée d'Antin,—comprehending the *haute finance*, the *élite* of the *bureaucratie*, and the relics of the imperial court. A little excess in the splendour of their dress and ceremoniousness of their politeness, seemed alone to distinguish them from that of the *Faubourg*; but the beauty of the women impressed him as favourably at first sight, as, on a nearer acquaintance, the intelligence of the men. For both, education seemed to have done more than for those to whom, according to *his* prejudices, nature imparted instinctive graces, enabling them to dispense, to a certain degree, with superficial accomplishments.

As he received at the door, for instance, the elaborate welcome of Madame Clermont de Thorigny, whose youth and beauty were disfigured by the exaggerated trimmings of her ball-dress, the grotesque originality of her costly jewels, and a bouquet that might have covered a parterre, he could not but contrast the effort of her

civilities with the graceful nonchalance of Madame de St. Pierre. The Faubourg Duchess was neither so young nor so pretty as the minister's wife; but her manner was so much more simple, her tone so much more refined, her good breeding so much more intuitive, that the impression left on the spectator was twice as favourable.

Still, it was impossible not to be gratified by the exceeding graciousness of one who, surrounded by so much homage as Madame de Thorigny, found time and inclination to be gracious. Greville recollected the cold majesty of Lady Wirksworth, and felt cheered by the kindness of his fair hostess.

“Will you not dance?”—inquired Ferdinand de Valsan, pressing towards Greville, after a *valse*, in which he had enjoyed the distinction of whisking round the gorgeous diamond chate-laine of the little Russian Countess, Madame de Kersakoff, — whose presence in a ball-room was announced by the splendour of her

jewels, as the tiny glow-worm is betrayed by its light.

“ I never dance. I told you this morning, if you remember, that I was no recruit for your *lions*.”

“ Hush, hush ! If you deal in such *rococo* terms, you will be pronounced *tout ce qu’il y a de plus fossile !*”—cried Ferdinand. “ The word *lion* has descended to *les Boulevarts*, to the heroes with long beards and *gants paille*, who make themselves heard at dinner at the Café de Paris, and make themselves seen in the balcon de l’Opéra. *Lion* is as much out of date in good society, as *muscadin*,—*incroyable*,—*merveilleux*.—It may come in again, perhaps, like the *roué* of the *régence*. *En attendant*, let me prevail upon you to take my place as the partner of Madame de Kersakoff, who is dying to make acquaintance with one in whom she discerns a *héros de roman*.”

“ A hero whose romance has reached the last page of its last volume !” —replied Greville,

smiling. "I should forfeit her good opinion were I to expose myself to the ordeal of even five minutes' conversation."

Valsan was too much in request, to stay and expostulate. Conceiving it impossible that a man of Greville's age and appearance could really dislike dancing, he attributed his refusals to the disgust often betrayed by his countrymen towards the mixed society inevitable in ministerial houses.

Greville did not long expose himself to the surmises of his young friend, or the indignation of Madame de Kersakoff. — His spirits were overpowered by the tumultuous scene. Though, in fact, far more brilliant than the gay and airy summer fêtes in which he had so joyously borne a part, there was between them general affinities which recalled to mind only too painfully the happier moments of his life.

On the morrow, he found that, for his own comfort, he had committed an act of indiscretion in appearing at the ball of the minister of

the home department. An Englishman of sufficient consideration to be a dinner-guest at the Chateau, was not likely to be overlooked; and as he had allowed it to be seen that his health was not too much impaired to admit of his gracing a ball-room, it was suggested that, to refuse the invitations of the other ministers to whom he had been made known by the royal family, would be an offence. The gentle disposition of Greville made him shrink from anything construable into an act of *hauteur*; and he accordingly resigned himself to pay his respects in succession at each of the ministerial houses.

To perform Kotoo to those who accept the salutation as mechanically as it is offered, is no great effort for even the laziest of mankind; nor was half an hour sacrificed in the course of the day to the exigencies of politeness a thing of much account. Still, poor Greville reviled himself for having subjected his patience to the trial.

A few nights after the ball, he found himself standing beside Ferdinand de Valsan in the saloon of another of the highest ministerial authorities.

“*I* am here to-night in attendance upon my father,” observed Valsan ; “*you*, I conclude, because a *soirée* in one of our leading *salons politiques* is more to the taste of a man who despises dancing, than the ball at the Austrian embassy, to which I am dying to steal away.”

“I am here as an act of courtesy towards one, distinguished, both in England and elsewhere, for his hospitalities to my countrymen,” replied Greville.

“Do your ministerial hotels in London equal this splendid local?” —demanded Valsan, to whom these praises of his host did not appear peculiarly acceptable,—as the doors of the saloon, opening for the admission of an ambassador, gave to view the fine columns of a majestic hall.

An involuntary smile overspread the face of the Earl. “We do not shine in public build-

ings," said he. "Our speaker's house was consumed with the houses of parliament,—Downing Street is a nest of *bureaux*,—and, with the exception of the Admiralty and Ordnance, and the habitation of one of our great law officers, we have no official hotels. Our ministers, however, belong to a class which supercedes the necessity for providing them with a town residence."

"Still, in my stupid opinion, it imparts dignity to office to point it out as specific," observed Valsan. "I like the statue of Jupiter Tonans to be enshrined in the temple of Jupiter Tonans. I should not feel half the respect I do for my brother-in-law, if he still resided in an apartment in the Rue Chautereine, instead of at the *ministère de l'intérieur*. The *huissiers* with their uniform, impose upon me;—and instead of slapping poor Thorigny on the shoulder when they usher me in, I naturally subside into my three bows."

“ With us, I suspect, it would afford a serious objection against accepting office, to be obliged to quit such residences as Lansdown or Devonshire Houses, for a noisy mansion in Whitehall. But, tell me,—you called this just now a political *salon* ?”—

“ Essentially so,” interrupted Valsan, “ which is one of my reasons for finding it insupportable. *De par tous les députés !* it would be a merciful interposition for society, if our chamber were to prolong its debates till cock-crow, after the example of yours, and so disencumber our salons of the very respectable furniture which would be so much more in place in its very respectable lumber-room. They talk of a law for making steam-engines consume their own smoke :—far more desirable to make parliament consume its own politics !”—

“ Desirable, for you or I, perhaps,” replied Greville. “ But there must surely be considerable advantage in the ex-official collision of

minds, which are required to think in concert.”—

“Don’t let them meet, then, on pretence of social intercourse,” cried Valsan. “Let the wholesome physic be taken under its right name, not on pretence of being *eau sucrée*. You have no conception of the curse entailed upon our ministers’ wives by this sort of *politique pralinée*. There is my own mother, for instance,—one of the most intelligent and agreeable women in France,—whose life has been devoted for the last twenty years to the presidency of a *salon politique*. Her spirit is worn out by the labour, which is anything but a labour of love. She has become incapable of using or understanding any better language than the jargon of official society ;—and now, alas ! my sister is devoted to the same *corvée* !”

“At least they have their reward in the importance attributed in France to official distinctions,” observed Greville.

“ Why, though both pretend that it would be a relief to return into the humble ranks of privacy,” replied Valsan, “ I suspect they would regret their factitious consequence. With you, they say, a minister’s wife scarcely ranks the higher for his office. If a Countess before, she is still only a Countess. With us, she is an idol for the worship of the vulgar,—whether the vulgar great or vulgar little.”

“ With you, women of all classes exercise a stronger influence,” said Greville; “ with you, they are encouraged to assume a more active part in the business of life. In a humbler condition, the tasks assigned them are those demanding intelligence of mind; in the higher classes, they are permitted to share the intellectual pursuits of their husbands and fathers. With us, the former spend their time in darning linen and sewing on buttons,—the latter in murdering sonatas and perpetrating second-rate landscapes. Perhaps I exaggerate;—but

to require an English woman to preside over a *salon politique*, would be to expose her to the ridicule of all parties."

"They are right,—*mille dieux!*—they are right!" cried Valsan, with affected earnestness. "What right have we to wither the smiles of a pretty face, and plant crowsfeet round a pair of eyes *taillé en amande*, by imposing upon them a task which we ourselves find so tedious? Darning linen and sewing buttons were rapture, compared with the bore of listening to the mouthing of that *faiseur de phrases* the Comte de —, or the humbug of our philanthropic député, Alphonse de Calinard. I never reflect upon my mother's or Céline's destinies without a groan!—Two such happy cheerful spirits to be broken on the wheel of politics!—To hear nothing but *projets* of this, and *projets* of that, when they want to be gossiping over the fire about *la pluie et la beau temps* with their husbands and children!"

Lord Greville did not think it necessary to suggest to his young friend that the deportment of Madame Clermont de Thorigny had impressed him strongly with an idea, that she would derive less satisfaction from the discussion of the weather with her prosy husband than from the privilege *de trôner* as a minister's wife; or that Frenchwomen are universally endowed by nature with instinctive tact for the little arts indispensable to the crooked career of officiality.

“Behold the result of the respect conceded to intellectual distinctions among us!” whispered Valsan, pointing out to his companion a woman of highly exotic aspect, whose beauty, though somewhat on the wane, was enhanced by every adornment that coquetry could devise or money procure. “See how they crowd round her the moment she enters the room!—Boys and veterans, statesmen and warriors,—all at her feet! In your moral country every door

would be closed against her. Here, such is the regenerating power of genius, that had her indiscretions been thrice as notorious—(and they are bruited loudly and widely enough!)—we should still open our arms to one who, with the scholarship of a man combines the most feminine sweetness and grace. But her arrival warns me to be off!—If once within reach of the fascinations of her voice and eye, no chance to night for my ball!—Shall we go together?”—

“I will accompany you as far as the hall.—I am not going to Madame A.’s.”

“Not going?—Why it will be the best ball we have had this year!”

“I comprehend the extent of my sacrifice.—But I have not yet attended Madame A.’s receptions, from a motive purely personal; and shall consequently, though invited, absent myself to-night.”

“Better relent in your own favour!—It is of all others the *salon* that combines the *notabilités*

of the Faubourg with those of our humbler world."

Lord Greville smiled as he persisted in his negative. Valsan had unconsciously cited the very motive of his pertinacity in avoiding the *Ambassade d'Autriche*. "It is decreed that I must go home quietly to bed," said he, as they moved together towards the ante-room.

"Go home to bed?—Not go to Madame A——'s?"—brayed a brazen voice; and lo, squaring his ungraceful shoulders to push his way into the room, and elevating his bushy chin, Colonel d'Aramon inflicted his usual formidable "shakhands" upon Greville. "I am just come from the opera," said he, as earnestly as if replying to an anxious question; "and I assure you my opinion is anything but unfavourable to the new ballet. The opera, we know, is not what it was,—we are not to expect from it the wonders of its high and palmy days;—nor is Fanny Elssler, Bigottini—we cannot ask the

impossible, even of Fanny Elssler,—but she is really far from despicable in this new thing. In many points, she rises to excellence. I recommend all my friends to go and see it.—I am on my way to the ball.—Everybody is on their way to the ball.—*You*, my dear Lord, must positively not think of shirking the ball. — It would be a positive slight.—I, for instance, am fatigued (as I heard you complain of being.) After a three-act ballet,—and above all,—after throwing myself, even for ten minutes, into such a *cohue* as this,” he continued, with a scarcely-concealed gesture of contempt, “one has a right to plead fatigue. Yet such is my sense of what is due to certain distinctions, that I shall make it a point to shew myself at the ball of the Austrian Ambassadress.”

“Is this blockhead likely to let you off?” whispered Valsan to Lord Greville, trying to disentangle him from d’Aramon. “If not, I must positively leave you in his clutches, being engaged for the second waltz to Madame de St. Sévron.”

“To whom?”—demanded Greville, in the same whisper.

“To the most charming *valseuse* in the Faubourg, Madame de St. Sévron,—a bride, you know. This is her first appearance in the world since her marriage,—and a marvellous sensation she will excite!”

“She is very handsome,” replied Greville, in a husky voice, fancying that some remark was indispensable.

“Ay, by the way, she was telling me this morning that she had known you a year or two ago,—on your return from Italy, was it not?—Better come with me to-night and renew your acquaintance! We can get off while your noisy friend is busy in following up his system of protection of the Fanny of Fannys by assuring the old Duke yonder, in confidence, that she is not Bigottini.”

Again did Greville decline, and once and again persist in his refusal, when their cabriolets drove successively to the door.

“ Farewell, then !” cried Valsan,—“ I shall make the best excuses I can for both of us to Madame de St. Sévron.—that is, if I can still prevail upon her to award me the honour of a valse. *Alerte, mon cher mitor!* Here is your bold cuirassier on the *perron*. To horse,—or—rather, to cabriolet, and away !”

CHAPTER V.

Ce que j'ai appris, je ne le sais plus. Le peu que je sais encore, je l'ai deviné.—CHAMPFORT.

MEANWHILE, the season proceeding so brilliantly on the banks of the Seine, was progressing with cheerless tediousness at Greville Abbey.

Eighteen months had elapsed since the crisis by which Lady Greville was disunited from her son. At first, she persuaded herself that their separation was to be of a temporary nature ; and that, after a short absence, attracted back

by the decencies of English society and the solid comforts of an English home, he would perceive the expediency of burying the past in oblivion, and coalescing in her schemes for his establishment in life. She reckoned largely, in short, upon the recklessness of youth, eager in pursuit of enjoyment, without too curious an examination into its means and nature.

But by degrees, these anticipations died away. In Greville's letters, not an allusion to the past,—not a syllable of a more intimate understanding between them,—not a hint of relenting!—Generalities relating to his foreign excursions filled every page;—dry, barren generalities, which she might have found in the last book of travels. Had there been one tender word,—one reference, however remote, to his sufferings and her own,—she had been content. But, search as she would, analyze as she might any obscure expression, she could detect no single idea affording hope that she stood in his eyes as she felt she had a right to stand, as a martyr,—a martyr

whose griefs and atonements were congenial with his own.

How often,—when some blotted word towards the conclusion of his letter defied her decipherment,—how often, when the signature, as is so frequently the case with letters from those we love, had been defaced by impatience in breaking the seal,—how often did she examine and re-examine the fracture, in the trust that it might contain some kinder qualification,—something beyond “Your affectionate son, HUGO !”

His title he had abandoned; even as from childhood SHE had deviated from common custom, in addressing him by his Christian name. But she thought that in her loneliness, in her grief, he might perhaps adopt some kindlier word than of old, in order to express his sense of commiseration. These letters, therefore, except as conveying the certitude that he was still living, were invariably a source of disappointment to the poor mother.

To his health or happiness, Greville never

adverted. The eligibility of keeping tranquil his mother's mind during his absence, warned him to forbearance on such points. So long as he spoke not of himself, so long as his handwriting remained unchanged, she was free to suppose him well and happy; and even the long silence arising from his dangerous sufferings in Egypt, he allowed her to ascribe to the miscarriage of letters, rather than avow that he had been on the point of death in his banishment from her and home.

The anguish inflicted by all this was beyond his power of comprehension. The organization of man renders it as impossible for him to appreciate the yearnings of a mother's affection, as the nature of woman to understand the profound agony of a strong masculine heart. His studied reserve was attributed by Lady Greville to indifference,—to heartlessness. She even fancied that, humiliated by her consciousness of his illegitimacy, he had imbibed towards her feelings of dislike. They stood towards each,

in short, in one of those false positions engendered by departure from ingenuousness, the fertile source of so many unworthy constructions.

Under the influence of afflictions such as these, the character of Lady Greville had undergone a complete transformation. For years she had contrived, by dint of great moral exertion, to form herself to the part she had been compelled to play in the world. The certitude of appearing cold, selfish, absolute, had never disturbed her equanimity; for the establishment of her son in the enjoyment of domestic happiness and worldly distinction was to be the exceeding great reward of her self-denial. But now that this hope had vanished, now that she saw there was no chance of his settling at Greville Abbey as a husband and father, or in his place as a peer of England, an honour to the order to which she had sacrificed so much to secure his footing, she threw up her task of dissimulation in disgust!—

Instead of the high-minded, glorious being, the pride of the nation and admiration of society, which she had foreseen from the hour of his birth in that only son, he was about to loiter away his listless existence, — achieving nothing, enjoying nothing, adorning nothing, — “unstable as water,” — unequal to the accomplishment of a single manly distinction. — But above all, — he was ungrateful ! — The hand-to-hand and heart-to-heart affection which she had toiled for, and after which she thirsted, as the wanderer in the desert after the cooling well, was denied her. — What mattered, therefore, the event of her future days ? — What mattered it, whether the oaks of Greville Abbey flourished, or were cut down ? — Whether the pictures of its galleries were dim with mildew, or bright with the effulgence of genius ? — Whether the gardens were embellished with every flower that variegates the savannahs of foreign climes, or suffered to run to waste ? — All that she had done, devised, cultivated, had been for him,

for his enjoyment, for his delectation; and since he was gone from her for ever, lost to her in body and mind, what availed the rest?—The widow may pledge her affections in second wedlock, the deserted lover may seek some fairer idol;—but the mother, abandoned in her age by the child in whose existence she has embarked her joys and sorrows, loses all by the shipwreck of that single venture. There is no redemption for such utter bankruptcy of the heart.

Fortunately, the despair of Lady Greville was of anything but a haughty cast; perhaps, because unembittered by remorse. It did not appear to her that she could have acted otherwise than she had done; if unhappy, it was through the instrumentality of others. There was consequently no moroseness in her self-abandonment; her grief displayed itself in listless forbearance with all the world. The calmness she had before assumed as a mask, was now natural. The root and branch of her happiness were alike withered;—“*la goutte d'eau*

comme la rivière était tarie !" She cared little whether friend or foe were spectators of her desolation.

" Wonders will never cease !" cried Mrs. Massingberd, one day, on hearing the squire receive intelligence from his groom that the veterinary surgeon had declared his favourite mare to have sprained her shoulder over an awkward grip lying in the bridle road betwixt Greville Abbey and Hill Hall. "*You* a visitor to Lady Greville ?—*You* riding over to the Abbey for a morning call ?—I wonder what Julia would say if she heard it !" —

" She would say, if she took the liberty of sitting in judgment on the conduct of her father, that he shewed a spirit of charity becoming his gray hairs, in extending a friendly hand towards a fallen enemy."

" A fallen enemy !—What do you mean by a fallen enemy ?" cried Mrs. Massingberd. " I am sure *I* should be very glad to tumble down

to an estate of fifty thousand a year, garnished with a Countess's coronet !”

“ Didn't you tell me the other day that the lady whom you no longer call your friend, was so altered that she was scarcely recognisable ?—that she was shrinking into a shadow, and as pale as a quire of Bath post ?—That Lady Brooks assured you she didn't know what to make of her ;—and that Anodyne swore there was nothing in the world the matter ?—All which, I take it, amounts pretty nearly to a certification that poor Lady Greville is in a plaguy bad way.”

“ And so you rode over to the Abbey to prescribe for her !”

“ I rode over to the Abbey to hold out my hand in friendly greeting ;—which is a thing that every human being has at one ugly moment or another found comfort from, when offered by a person whom they are conscious of having unjustly slighted.”

“And prettily surprised she must have been! Why, I don’t believe you had paid her a morning visit before these three years!”—

“Double it, and you will be nearer the mark!—But what then?—Kindness, like summer, may come late, but never *too* late! Lady Greville perfectly understood my good intentions; though I can’t say I found her looking so ill as *your* croaking and Anodyne’s favourable view of the case, prepared me to expect.”

“I’m sure I can’t guess, then, *how* ill you wanted to find her. I’m persuaded she wont live through the winter.”

“She wont live through the winter at Greville Abbey,—for she has taken a house, till April, at Torquay.”

“Dear me, how absurd!—when every one knows that the climate of the sheltered valley, where the Abbey, like other abbeys, lies niched in clover, is as mild as Madeira.”

“Change of scene is sometimes as advantageous as change of air. The poor woman is

evidently fretting. Do you remember how I used to predict that when that lad of hers slipped his collar, 'twould be long enough before she recovered her hold upon him?—'Tis now a year and a half since Lord Greville left England; and nearly three months since she heard a word of his movements!"

"Humph!—I suspect *you* would not die of fretting, Mr. Massingberd, if you had heard no news of Frederick for the last three months."—

"How often, Madam, must I remind you, that if *my* son,—he is yours also;—and that every taunt with which you favour me concerning his follies, ought to inflict an equal pang upon both his parents!"

"I can't agree with you. I neither sowed his follies, by spoiling him,—nor cultivated them by concealment."—

"Concealment!—No! To do you justice, Fred was never guilty of a fault that you did not proclaim four-and-twenty hours afterwards, in the market-place at Squeamington!—It is

not every woman that has the grace to suffer in silence, like Lady Greville!"

"Why, I declare you're getting quite the champion of Lady Greville,—‘the cold-hearted, worldly Lady Greville,’ as you used to call her."

"I called her what I thought her!—But when I see a woman's afflictions weighing her down into the grave, and her worldliness consist in renunciation of all earthly pomps and vanities, I am free to admit that I have mistaken her, or that she has amended her vocation. Ask Dowdeswell!—he will tell you that there has been something almost unnatural in the poor woman's meekness, ever since she lost sight of her son. Ask Lady Brooks, and she will tell you there has never been a smile on the Countess's face since she——"

"I suppose she can't bear to see the period of her power draw to an end?" interrupted the little spiteful old lady. "Next year, young Greville comes of age, you know; and where will she be then?"

“Invested, most likely, with the attributes of immortality!” replied the Squire, in a tone of solemn reproof. — “The poor woman will be in her grave!—But don’t let us talk any more about the matter. It seems ordained that Greville Abbey is ever to be a bone of contention between us. When she was happy and healthy, you made me sick by puffing her excellence; now she is sad and sorry, you provoke me by crowing over her decline. But, once for all, understand, Mrs. Massingberd, that Lady Greville, in her present mood of mind, has become anew the widow of my friend; and by Jove, ma’am, neither your jeers nor any other motive shall prevent my paying her the respect due to the distress of a stout mind bearing up against affliction.”

Such was the desolation of the home he had abandoned; while Greville, scarcely less depressed in spirit than his mother, was sauntering through the brilliant crowds of the French capital,—“among them, but not of them.”

Even the brief moments of pleasure imparted by the rare combinations of beauty, wit, and graciousness, with which the coteries of Paris fascinate the eyes and understandings of superficial observers, were now at an end; and gladly would he have withdrawn himself from the spot, but from the dread of appearing to take flight on the approach of the Comte de St. Sévron and his bride.

After thirty, a man of the world follows his devices and inclinations;—till that epoch, the *qu'en-dira-t-on* retains an overmastering influence. After thirty, he discovers that, frame his sayings and doings as he may, they must either offend the great majority of commonplace people, or the small minority of the initiated;—that either quantity or quality must be arrayed against him;—and consequently adopts one or other of two golden rules, “*fais ce que dois, advienne qui pourra,*” or “*fais ce qui te fait plaisir, trouve à redire qui voudra!*” Greville was still remote from the epoch of

independence. He was not yet arrow-proof against the shafts of ridicule. The wisdom begotten of sickness and solitude, receded from the garish eye of pleasure,—as ill at ease among the frivolities of fashion as a sober owl in the gilded parrot-cage of a lady's boudoir.

At thirty, as at eighteen, he would have ordered horses to his carriage and made the best of his way to the Antelope at Marseilles, or the Ship Inn at Dovor ;—leaving cards of adieu or apology for Madame la Comtesse of this, or his Excellency the Ambassador from that ;—a little word of excuse to Achille de Cerny, with whom he was engaged to dine, and another little word to a pretty Russian Countess who had enlisted his services as her cavalier. But at four-and-twenty,—timid, sensitive four-and-twenty,—he fancied his abrupt departure from Paris would betray not only to his *laquais de place*, but to all these people, from the solemn ambassador down to the giddy St. Petersburgian, that he was flying from the sight of

the bridal happiness of the Count and Countess Tristan de St. Sévron!—As if the world of the Carnival were not too busy with follies of its own, to examine, beyond the surface, those of other people!—

Never had poor Greville submitted with a worse grace to the iron collar of politeness, than when compelled to present himself at the apartments of Madame de Kersakoff; who, at a diplomatic dinner, had given him rendezvous as her cicerone to visit the gallery of Aguado. His ill-humour did not decrease on finding the pretty little Russian coiled up in sables before the fire, in utter indifference to her appointment.

“*Did* I talk of going to see the pictures to-day?” said she. “I dare say I did, if you say so.—But it is so horribly cold,—and pictures are so horribly tiresome;—and I have got such a horrible *migraine*!”—

A Frenchman would have perceived from the *moue* of the blooming little face that peeped out

of her well-furred *vitchoura* that the fanciful beauty only wanted coaxing to ring and order her carriage. But Greville, seizing on the pretext to throw off his engagement, instantly rose with assiduous apologies for having intruded upon the solitude of an invalid.

“Nay, stay and try to amuse me, since you are here!” said she, motioning him to be seated. “*Y a-t-il du nouveau aujourd’hui ?*—Are we to have war?—When will they have done rehearsing the new opera?—Is Torn’s ball to be *costumé*?—What has transpired concerning the express from Constantinople?—Is not ‘Pauline’ a gem?—When are we to dance at the Hotel de Ville?—*Il me semble que ce cher Préfet nous oublie.*”

Albert de La Roche Aymar, or even Ferdinand de Valsan, instead of attempting to supply answers to queries overflowing as if from the countless tongues of rumour, would have silenced the pretty little *ennuyée* with some startling piece of intelligence. Greville was a novice.

Greville, like a common-sensical Englishman, began at the beginning; and instead of assuring her that her cap *la coëffait divinement*, that the *douillette* of her *demie santé* became her better than the gayest full-dress of other women, and that the Rajah of Catamaran had abdicated, he began with peace and war as gravely as Shakspeare's Nestor; and was proceeding to the new opera with a vigour of prose calculated to do honour to a debate upon the corn laws; when Madame de Kersakoff naturally interrupted him with a new string of interrogatories.

“ Was it true that a lap-dog with a diamond necklace round its neck had been sent as a wedding cadeau to the young Comtesse de St Sévron?—How was the Chamber to divide upon the eastern question?—Had he heard that the *Giraffe* was *heureusement accouchée d'un giraffon?*” &c.

Imperfectly skilled, alas! in

The science not unwise to trifle well,

the perplexed Greville made so poor a stand under this attack, that the little Countess gave him up in despair; and conceiving it would be less of a bore to visit a picture gallery with an uncommunicative man than to endure him tête-à-tête, discovered that her *migraine* might perhaps benefit by a drive, and ordered her carriage.

“*Chez Monsieur le Marquis de las Marismas!*” said the Countess to her footman, as she crossed the vestibule.

“*Chez Aguado!*”—repeated the footman to the coachman, as he took his place behind the chariot, and five minutes afterwards, they entered the stately courtyard in the Rue Grange Batelière of a superb mansion, once the notorious *Salon*, and now the palace of a stock-jobber. As they received from the hands of a chasseur, arrayed in a gorgeous livery, a printed catalogue of pictures which, if original, had done honour to the collection of a crowned head, the Countess remarked querulously to her companion that, with the exception of the gal-

leries of Prince Lichtenstein and Prince Esterhazy at Vienna, she had never seen the warmth and comfort of the public so nobly provided for as by the Spanish Mæcenas. And what right had a *nouveau riche* to affect the airs of a sovereign?

“I am come only to see Canova’s Magdalen,” added she, with signal disregard to the *amour propre* of other loungers in the gallery. “They tell me there are fine pictures here by Velasquez, Murillo, and other Spanish masters—But I don’t care to look at them. If they were only tolerable, one might put one’s faith in their authenticity.—But chef-d’œuvres of Murillo and Velasquez don’t drop from the skies into the money market! Money will do wonders.—But money, though it may furnish fine houses and fine liveries, will not improvise a fine picture gallery.—I want to see the Magdalen.—The Magdalen requires no pedigree to attest its originality.—Pray take me straight to the Magdalen.”

Straight towards the Magdalen did Greville, already familiar with the merits of the interesting collection before him, conduct his whimsical charge. But before they had half accomplished the tour of the gallery, Madame de Kersakoff, who, since their departure from home, had contrived to whine her discontents against the weather, the springs of her carriage, the pace of her horses, the tenu of her servants, the height of the staircase, and some fifty other imaginary evils, began to discover that the parquet was too highly waxed, and that she would just as soon skait upon the canal de l'Ourcq as complete her expedition.

To draw her arm closer within his own, and breathe earnest re-assurances to the timid beauty that his care and assiduity should secure her from all accidents, was a matter of course. Had Madame de Kersakoff been a less pretty woman, Greville and the rest of her victims would probably have discovered that she was *exigeante* beyond the reach of human patience ;

but with so sweet a smile, and eyes as blue as the depths of a mountain lake, she was of course privileged to be as disagreeable as suited her convenience. So long as a man perceives that the caprices to which he is required to administer, expose him to the envy rather than the contempt of other men, he is content to be a slave. Greville noticed, as he whispered his re-assurances to the *jolie capricieuse*, that several loungers in the gallery regarded him as a very happy man; and submitted manfully to his fate.

“*Partons—mon Dieu! partons!—je me sens un redoublement de ma migraine!*” cried she, at last, having attempted all other modes of exciting his sympathy. “The glare of these horrible pictures is killing me with the headache!—”

In the vestibule below, as they stood waiting for the carriage, the Countess discovered that the tedious descent of the staircase had completed her annihilation; and down she sat beside the stove, to display her affectations for

the amusement of the corn-flower and poppy *livrée* of the Marquis de Las Marismas.

“ Did you notice that singularly fine portrait of a woman in a monastic habit, half-way down the gallery ?” said Greville, addressing his companion, in hopes of withdrawing her attention from her own ailments.

“ Half-way down the gallery ? No !—I saw nothing as we skated our way back through the gallery but the frightful bonnet of Madame de St. Sévron. Herbault may say what he will, but those marabout trimmings on a winter bonnet make a woman’s face resemble the visage of a half-fledged owlet. *C’est atroce !* Really Madame de St. Sévron was *à montrer au doigt*.”

Lord Greville, after the first shock of surprise at hearing how nearly and how unconsciously he had been on the point of stumbling into the presence of Eugénie, was vexed to perceive a smile of intelligence pass among the footmen who were in waiting. The servants of Madame de St. Sévron were doubtless among them. But

though it would have been easy to render the further remarks of Madame de Kersakoff incomprehensible to them by addressing her in English, (a language which, like most well-born Russians, she spoke with the fluency of a native,) the proper name must still betray that Madame de St. Sévron was the person who invested her countenance with so contemptuous an expression.

“ *Quant à cette bonne Madame de St. Sévron,*” continued she; “nothing can be a greater blunder than her fancying that because she is a bride, she may give herself the airs of a beauty. The notion of *her* leading a fashion is quite preposterous!—Don’t you think so?—But I forget!—She is of the Faubourg world,—only just arrived, too, from the provinces,—and you have probably never seen her. If we wait here a little longer, she will make her appearance; when you will be able to decide whether she is worthy the lap-dog with the diamond neck-lace presented to her by the Prince de Chaulieu.”

Such an intimation was of course the means of causing Madame la Comtesse de Kersakoff's carriage to be announced without loss of time ; but even while rejoicing in his escape, Greville felt satisfied that he must have been seen by Eugénie, devoting his attentions to one of the emptiest and idlest of the butterflies fluttering in the coteries of the fashionable world. His adieus were as cold as Kamschatka ; and Madame de Kersakoff was perhaps justified in her confidence to Achille de Cerny that night at the opera, that "*ce Milor*, whom he had presented to her acquaintance, was *ennuyeux comme la pluie ;—be-beau,—mais be-bête.*"

"Better make up my mind to *brusquer* the meeting!"—cried he, after pacing his drawing-room for an hour, in utter discomposure, on reaching home. And to the Italian opera he went that night, far more with a view of daring an encounter with the fair bride of the Faubourg, than of enjoying the mellow cadences of Rubini.

“Which is Madame de St. Sévron’s box?”—was his straightforward inquiry of Achille de Cerny, whom he met coming out of that of Madame de Kersakoff, which emitted a dandy and an overpowering scent of patchouli, whenever it opened.

“You are out of luck, *mon cher*,”—replied Cerny. “It is not her night. Her box is the third from the column, on the ground tier.”

By a sudden relaxation of every nerve, at this announcement, Greville became conscious of their previous tension. He almost ground his teeth to find that the self-command he had been exercising for the last two hours was thrown away.

“Come with me to-night to the Hotel de St. Pierre,—it is the Duchess’s first reception; and *there* you will be sure to see the St. Sévrons,” added Cerny, detecting the emotion of his companion.

“Thanks,—I seldom go to parties;—never,

when I can avoid it!"—replied Greville. And again, he returned home in all the irritation of mind arising from the consciousness of a baffled purpose.

Few people are, at the trouble of analyzing their own feelings. The beautiful exhortation of the poet Mickievics, "Have a heart—and examine it!"—has no meaning for the multitude. But to those *possessed* of hearts, who *do* descend to the duty of self-inquiry, it is a curious study to perceive how suddenly, after a long struggle of the feelings, the mist clears up which left us in doubt as to the nature of the predominant passion. Even as Greville had become suddenly aware, in London, of the nature of Eugénie's ascendancy over his mind, he now saw that, till the moment of her marriage, he had cherished hopes of the eventual removal of the obstacles which divided them from each other. Hitherto, he had never been thoroughly impressed with the evils of his fate; but every

bitterness was become doubly embittered by the certitude that he was now an object of indifference to her. Of all he had been compelled to resign, the greatest sacrifice was the domestic bliss conferred by the noble-minded Eugénie de Nangis on the happy household of another !—

CHAPTER VI.

On n'aurait pu voir une tête plus belle, plus noble, plus virginale. Phidias, pour sculpter sa Minerve, n'aurait pas désiré un autre modèle.

MÉRIMÉE.

It was provoking enough to be reminded, a day or two afterwards, by Countess Kersakoff, (who having, after the fashion of the *grandes dames* of her country, left her husband to duties in the Imperial household, was forced to recruit into her service, as an escort, any agreeable foreigner lying at the mercy of her caprices,)—

that he had promised to escort her to the Académie. Greville had a rooted antipathy to the French opera, unless when modified by the performance of some popular ballet; and on the present occasion, he had to submit to the shrill pipe of the little coquette on one side, and on the other, the

Guns, trumpets, blunderbusses, drums, and thunder

of the Huguenots!—A succession of visitors, however, reconciled Madame de Kersakoff to her fate in having so sober a cavalier; nor was it till towards the close of the last act that she voted the whole affair *profondément ennuyeux*, and begged him to go in search of the carriage.

Apparently, the whole audience shared in Madame de Kersakoff's opinion of a piece which they had seen often enough to become weary even of its merits,—for the *foyer* and *vestibule* were already encumbered; and lo! just as he was pushing through the crowd in search of the Countess's *chasseur*, a cry from the

annonciateur, that "*la voiture de Madame la Comtesse de St. Sévron était avancée!*" caused him to hurry from the door. A moment afterwards, amid the throng of footmen and fine ladies at the foot of the staircase, the Prince de Chaulieu, dragging onwards a lady wrapt in a costly mantle, passed near him; and in the apprehension that it might possibly be Eugénie, hastening to her carriage, Greville drew back behind the iron railing. He had, however, already attracted the notice of Chaulieu's fair companion; who, following him to his retreat, extended one of those symmetrical and well-gloved hands which only the coquetry of Paris is capable of exhibiting.

The smiling face which justified this friendly greeting, though happily not that of Eugénie, presented the charming countenance of her intimate friend, Sidonie de Chaulieu.

"How arre you?"—said she, in choice Faubourg English. "I herred you vas in Parees. Vy do you not come and see me? Ave you

sin Eugénie and Sophie?—Non?—Ah! you must come and mit them *chez nous*.”—

The Prince de Chaulieu impatiently interrupted and hurried her away, to prevent the carriage driving off, before any answer could be given; and a few minutes afterwards, Greville was himself hastening Madame de Kersakoff towards hers, with nearly similar impatience.

“I was very near getting Monsieur de St. Sévron to go and assist you in finding my people; I was afraid you were lost on the road,” said she, pettishly, on his return with news of having found the carriage.

“You have seen Monsieur de St. Sévron, then?”—said Greville, eagerly.

“Did you not find him with me just now?—Ah! no—he was gone to look after his wife.—Poor fellow!—he used to be so agreeable five years ago at St. Petersburg;—and now, so changed!—But what an idiot,—at his age and with his habits, to encumber himself with a young wife!—*Aussi, il est à parier qu’il s’en*

répent, — for I never saw a man look more thoroughly out of humour.”

Greville readily conceived that any man might look out of humour when exposed to the whimsicalities of Madame de Kersakoff. But there was sacrilege in the suggestion that the husband of Eugénie could view his marriage with regret !

“To-morrow night is the ball of our embassy,” — whispered Madame de Kersakoff, from among the chenille tassels of the Geneviève in which her foolish little face was enveloped. “Pray don’t forget that you have promised to be my cavalier for the evening.”

Greville had no alternative but a grateful bow. He would probably, however, have procured a medical certification of illness to exempt him from the fête, but for the recollection that in a Russian salon the *notabilités* of the Faubourg were sure to be collected. He went accordingly, resolved to renew his acquaintance with the St. Pierres, and others of a circle

which was beginning its festivities, now that the agitation of the ministerial fêtes was relaxing.

It was a noble ball. In most countries, the Russians bear away the palm wherever magnificence is concerned. A sort of barbaric splendour magnifies their ideas of hospitality; and like the genii of an Arabian tale, whose vocation it is to erect palaces in deserts, they seem to fancy it impossible to erect them on too grand a scale. The Russians, in short, are playing on the stage of continental civilization, the part assumed by the English a century ago. If John Bull no longer swaggers along the grand tour with his pockets overflowing with guineas, begging to be robbed, the Muscovite, who dashes over the same ground with his equipages, emitting clouds of smoke, and his travelling trunks studded with malachite, is quite as sure a mark for exaction.

Scarcely had Greville ceded to the arm of the Prince de Chaulieu for a *valse*, the trouble-

some little personage under his protection, when he found himself confronted face to face with the Count de St. Sévron. A sudden flush overspread the faces of both!—For a moment, the Count seemed, like himself, overpowered by some painful reminiscence, inclining him to reserve. But the sincere regard with which the young Englishman had inspired him on their first acquaintance, quickly dispelled the impression; and he extended his hand with almost as friendly a movement as Sidonie de Chaulieu the preceding night.

“Not a word of congratulation on my marriage!”—cried he, forestalling the compliment which he fancied about to burst from the lips of Greville. “I am now a Benedict of a fortnight standing, and have heard nothing during that time from my friends, but their wishes for my happiness. On this occasion, let me rather inquire after your own. One of my countrymen (having heard prayers put up for your recovery last year in the Convent of St. Catherine, at

Sinai) had threatened us, my dear Lord, that we were never to see you more?"—

"I underwent several severe attacks of illness in the East," replied Greville, trusting that the agitation which caused his hands to tremble was not equally perceptible in his voice and countenance. "I have been a great wanderer since we parted at Chantilly. I have even pitched my tent in the deserts of Libya."

"When you return to London, *mon cher*, the Travellers' Club will attest that *I*, too, have accomplished wonders since I saw you!"—replied St. Sévron, gaily. "To reach your *ultima Thule* is almost as great a pilgrimage for a *ba-daud* like myself, as for you to attain the source of the Nile."

"You have visited Scotland?—As a sportsman, of course?—Were you very successful?"—

"I went on matters of business, and was wholly *unsuccessful*," replied St. Sévron, gravely. *Passons là-dessus*,—and tell me why you have never been to see me since your arrival?—On

hearing from Madame de Sévron that you were in Paris, I hastened to your old quarters at the Hotel des Princes. They knew nothing of you !”

“ I had promised myself”—Greville was beginning, with evident hesitation.

“ Come, come ! I like you too well to drive you to the poor resource of studied apology !” interrupted St. Sévron. “ We have shaken hands, and are now in charity. All I ask is, that you will repair your fault by coming quickly to the Hotel St. Sévron, and returning often.”

Greville replied by a bow, which he strove to render affirmative.

“ There is one old friend of yours, however, who is less disposed to be forgiving,” resumed the Count. “ Madame de Rostanges cannot pardon your not having inquired after the health of her husband. Poor Rostanges, as you are probably aware, is in a most precarious state. We had scarcely grounds for hoping he would

ever rally sufficiently to attempt the journey to Paris, which was my wife's motive for insisting on the solemnization of our marriage in Normandy. The gratification, however, of beholding the cheerful faces of two people to whose happiness he had contributed, has exercised a salutary effect; and they are now, after a year's absence, once more in the Rue St. Dominique. You will not, I trust, enlarge the catalogue of your sins past forgiveness, by absenting yourself much longer from their house."

"I shall do myself the honour of calling there to-morrow," said Lord Greville, unable to throw off his embarrassment sufficiently to emulate the easy tone of his companion.

"Madame de Rostanges, as I need not tell *you*, who formed so just an appreciation of her merits," resumed St. Sévron, "proves the best of nurses, as she was before the best of wives. Nothing can exceed her devotion to the invalid. She will not hear of leaving him, which I approve. But I see no occasion

that her sister also should be deprived of the pleasures suitable to her age. Yet but for the persuasions of her friend Sidonie, she would confine herself entirely to the sick room. I had the greatest difficulty in getting her here to-night. I look to your eloquence, my dear lord, to induce her to be equally persuadable on another occasion."

Surprised, almost shocked by the levity of this allusion, Greville was not sorry to find Madame de Kersakoff return to him at that moment from the dance, to claim her gloves and bouquet.

"*Ah ! ça, mon cher St. Sévron*, will you be so very obliging as to tell your wife that she waltzes like a French woman, that is, worse than any other woman in Europe," cried Madame de Kersakoff, throwing herself pettishly into a chair. "She just now nearly threw me down by planting herself like a milestone in my way. Milor, may I trouble you to go and look for an apricot ice? The Prince de Chaulieu

has been trying to persuade me there are none to be had. The Prince de Chaulieu will not listen to my assurances that in *this* house everything is to be had."

Satisfied that he should lead an easier life by evading than by opposing her whims, Greville hastened off in obedience to her commands. He even succeeded in the accomplishment of her wish; and was slowly returning, when the sudden revulsion of blood to his heart as he caught sight of a finely-turned head, round which a heavy braid of raven hair seemed to form a natural diadem, apprized him that he was in the presence of Eugénie.

But was it her, indeed?—The smile of youth no longer on her lip,—the elation of joy no longer in her eyes,—the bloom of girlhood no longer on her cheek!—Pale as marble, and grave with more than matronly gravity, the salutation with which she returned his profound bow, though hurried by surprise, brought not the slightest tinge of colour to her face. Her beauty, which

was still remarkable, recalled to Greville's mind the face of Diana, in a picture he had seen at Bologna, wherein the artist had chosen to envelop in ghastly moonlight the countenance of the mystic goddess.

“ Unless I address her at once, these miserable feelings of embarrassment will be ever recurring,” was the reflection that darted through the mind of Greville. Hastily approaching her, accordingly he began to pour forth, in a low and inarticulate voice, his regrets at hearing from Monsieur de St. Sévron such unfavourable tidings of the health of the Marquis de Rostanges.

“ My brother-in-law is indeed in a melancholy condition,” replied Eugénie firmly. “ His sole consolation is derived from the assiduity of his wife and the devotedness of his friends; of whom none more kind, none more valued, than Monsieur de St. Sévron.”

Greville fancied he could detect an inflexion of triumph in her tone, as she vaunted the virtues of her husband.

“It is only to-night that I became aware of his illness,” stammered Greville, as if in excuse for his negligence.

“Which is, however, of such permanence,” replied Eugénie, coldly, “that your statement serves to prove you have never inquired after him of our mutual friends. The Marquis has a better memory,” she continued, almost sternly. “On arriving in Paris, he made instant inquiries after the Lord Greville whom the papers announced as dining at the Château, and was eager that Sophie should endeavour to obtain your address.”

Greville attempted some inexplicit declaration of gratitude.

“We women are perhaps more resentful of neglects,” added Eugénie, with a scornful smile; “for my sister refused to write to you till you deigned to afford us some token of your being in Paris.”

Satisfied that both Sophie and the bride were aware of the motive of his avoidance

of their society, Greville felt resentful of the persecution of these accusations. He bowed coldly, as if to put an end to the conversation ; when something of relenting in the eyes of Eugénie,—something of more feminine grace betrayed in the turn of her classical head, served to rivet him to the spot. The Eugénie of old times was before him ; as when, moved either to anger or terror by his devotion to her sister, she used suddenly to bend her gaze upon his face, as if to penetrate his projects,—nay, sometimes as if to implore his forbearance. Lovely as he had thought her, even then, in the midst of his infatuation, she had never appeared so passing fair as now, when secret sorrow of some nature or other had impressed its grave signet on her brow. Either the affliction impending over the Marchioness, or some profound regret, had evidently saddened her bridal hours. Even her dress appeared to Greville little in accordance with the brilliancy of her new position.—No dia-

monds sparkled amid her glossy hair.—No bracelets encircled the arms which might have served as models to the sculptor.—Simple as ever, and as ever of purest white, there was nothing of the Comtesse de St. Sévron in the robe whose folds hung round her like the drapery of some antique statue.

Greville felt inexpressibly gratified by finding so little of her new condition announced in her dress and deportment. As an excuse for loitering near her, he hazarded some general remarks upon the beauty of the ball.

“I am no great judge of such scenes!” she replied, with a vague smile. “You may remember of old that I never shared my sister’s passionate love of dancing. To-night, I came hither in compliance with the earnest desire of Sidonie and Monsieur de St. Sévron.”

The name, pronounced by her lips, grated upon the ear of Greville; more especially as she gave it utterance, with the unconcern of perfect familiarity.

“ But I am anxious to get away,” she added. “ I want sadly to be at home again.—We are waiting only for Sidonie to fulfil two or three engagements.”

“ Do you not dance, then ?” inquired Greville, with a degree of carelessness that ought to have apprised her he spoke without personal projects.

“ Certainly not to-night,” she replied, with a sudden alteration of manner. Then, as if fearing he might be pained by so abrupt a mode of intimating that it would be useless to ask the honour of her hand, she added, “ The precarious condition of my brother-in-law renders it disagreeable to me to join in such diversions.”

Yet half-an-hour afterwards, as he stood conversing with Madame de Kersakoff in the supper-room, Ferdinand de Valsan suddenly joined them from the dance, full of raptures concerning a valse he had been enjoying with Madame de St. Sévron !—Greville could scarcely

conceal his disgust at her hypocrisy or inconsistency.

“ You have actually been dancing with Madame de St. Sévron ? ” he inquired, half-aside, of his friend, as though the fact needed confirmation.

“ If you were not in the crowd of those who stood by to applaud our performance, I am sorry for you,” replied Valsan, passing his hand through his curls, to the detriment of the second pair of *gants paille* with which he had done honour to the ball. “ I flatter myself, *mon cher*, there are not *many* such valseurs in Paris as myself and Madame de St. Sévron !—Madame de St. Pierre is lighter in hand, but she cannot *balancer sur place* with the tact and nicety of the *charmante mariée*.”

Repeatedly had Greville attempted to defend Valsan from the charge of *fatuité* to which the exquisitism of the young *auditeur* exposed him in the sober official circles that were his natural element. But it was not likely that, after

this *boutade* he should ever again become the advocate of so inveterate a coxcomb.

“I can only tell you,” interrupted Madame de Kersakoff, *trépignant du pied* with impatience of such praises bestowed upon a rival, “that in Vienna or St. Petersburg, where people *do* valse, Madame de St. Sévron would be condemned to *faire tapisserie* throughout the evening.—Nobody would even risk such a partner. Here, you achieve a sort of *sauteuse* which, if you can but contrive to make fast enough, is pronounced to be the perfect *deux temps*. Trust me, there are not six people in Paris who have the most remote idea of it.—Strauss, you know, threw you up in disgust.”

“I resign myself to being thrown up in disgust, in company with Madame de St. Sévron,” cried Ferdinand, swallowing his third tumbler of lemonade and champagne. “Ah! they are going!—She assured me she had been staying only to keep her engagement with *me*. I must go and help her to find her shawl,” cried he,

hurrying off towards the anteroom whither Monsieur and Madame de St. Sévron, accompanied by Sidonie, were directing their steps. Greville presumed it was to Mademoiselle de Chaulieu he must offer his arm; the Count having monopolized that of Eugénie, evidently resolved not to cede his privilege to the favourite partner of his bride.

“They are trying, I really believe, to cry that woman into fashion!” whined Madame de Kersakoff, noting the *empressement* of Ferdinand. “*C’est en pure perte*.—It will never do!—She was designed by nature for a dowdy, and a dowdy she will remain.—No grace,—no *tournure*,—no coquetry,—no anything! You might as well attempt to make a *femme à la mode* out of one of the wicker figures in Giroux’s shop!”—

“I do not imagine that Madame de St. Sévron has any ambition to become a *lionne*!” replied Greville, not choosing to hear his own disapprobation expressed by any other person;

“but not even the devotion of a *prétentieux* like Ferdinand de Valsan will prevent the world from seeing in her one of its fairest ornaments.”

Had not Madame de Kersakoff been aware that, in the estimation of the *crème de la crème*, Lord Greville stood supreme, and that he might become the hero of almost any romance he chose to call into action, his *mal adresse* in entertaining her with praises of a rival, would probably have exiled him for ever from her good graces. As it was, she merely shrugged her shoulders, with a secret ejaculation concerning the originality of the English.

“Come into the ball-room, and see the mazurka,” said she, appropriating his arm as unceremoniously as she would have done that of an arm-chair, as the piquant measures of the national dance resounded from the distant orchestra. “Here, you will see it accomplished in a somewhat different style from the hoydening of the Faubourg!—Look at Madame Charles de B——, look at our pretty little Madame de

B——, and render justice to my countrywomen! The most agreeable women in Paris this winter are all Russians. We are more frank, more cordial, than Frenchwomen,—more obliging,—more true.—Many people praise the vivacity of the Parisians;—for my part, I find them *vapour-euses* and affected.—Nothing can be more dawling,—nothing more *fainéante*!—Whereas the Russians—”

“Leave me one single little word of praise to utter in their honour!”—cried Greville, placing her in an ostensible position in the ball-room, in hopes that some inveterate mazurka-dancer might disencumber him of one who, though light as a feather, was so heavy a burthen. “One little word of praise, in which to concentrate a world of admiration.”

Trusting that his gratitude to Prince P——, who soon afterwards snatched the little Countess into the round of the mazurka, was not unbecomingly manifested, Greville profited by his

leisure to contemplate the only ball-room he had seen during the winter, unencumbered by the ungainly crowd of deputies besetting the royal and ministerial fêtes. The sallow but distinguished faces of the *monde diplomatique* appeared like a spiritualization of society, after the hard features of the hard-working politicians of the reformed parliament of France.

Familiarized to Madame de Kersakoff's hourly whinings concerning the delicacy of her health, and to find her, morning after morning, unequal to the task of walking from one room into another, Greville had flattered himself, when compelled to escort her to the ball, that a very short enjoyment of its pleasures would suffice. But to his amazement, valse succeeded contredanse, and mazurka valse, and the tiny Countess remained untirable. When the cotillon struck up the signal for the retreat of cross chaperons, maternal or marital, she was one of the first to take posses-

sion of an arm-chair, with the Prince de Chau-lieu by her side ;—prepared with all the little whips and stings of coquetry peculiar to that piece of grown-up child's play. Yet Greville reconciled himself without much difficulty to his duties. With unaccountable weakness, he felt as if retiring to rest would bring him nearer to the hour of rising, and the dreaded moment of repairing to the Hotels de Rostanges and de St. Sévron.

Even the longest cotillon, however, will have an end. The strifes and envyings of the various couples seated round the room were successively appeased by some act of cotillon vengeance. The *chaîne* was romped through at last ;—the strain, so often seeming to die away to be so often renewed, experienced a sudden death ;—the weary musicians were released ; and the panting crowd hurried into the refreshment room to await the arrival of trays of *bouillon*, indispensable to a French ball. Nothing re-

mained for Greville but a night of broken rest, as a preliminary to a day of unbroken care.

Painful as were his anticipations, he had, however, insufficiently prepared himself for the overpowering emotions that beset him on the threshold of the Hotel de St. Sévron on the following morning. The porter's intimation that "Monsieur le Comte was gone out," and "Madame la Comtesse not yet visible," scarcely sufficed to the restoration of his self-command.

As he drove rapidly off towards the Rue St. Dominique, he recalled to mind how, on occasion of his last visit, he had been stopped by Giacchimo with tidings of his mother's dangerous illness. Could the lapse of less than two years have effected so complete a revolution in his character, that he now remained, week after week, in contented ignorance concerning the welfare of Lady Greville, while the mere consciousness of approaching the Hotel de St. Sév-

ron sufficed to agitate every pulse of his throbbing heart?—

On sending in his name to the *concierge* of the Hotel de Rostanges, he was instantly admitted; nay, the venerable servants waiting in the vestibule, by whom he was conducted, *à pas de loup*, through the suite of rooms, seemed almost disposed to salute him with a friendly greeting.

“How is the Marquis to-day, Baptiste?” inquired he of the old maître d’hotel, by way of marking his recognition of a former favourite.

“Rather better than worse, milor,” replied the old man, in a cautious whisper. “The Comte de St. Sévron is with him. Monsieur le Marquis is always the better for the visits of the Comte de St. Sévron.”

There is something peculiarly depressing in the stealthy pace and subdued voices announcing the presence of sickness and danger in a mansion wherein we are accustomed to the predominance of cheerfulness and health. Instead

of flinging open, as of old, the double *battans* of the saloon for the admittance of an honoured guest, Baptiste requested milor to wait an instant till his arrival was announced to the invalid; and as the old man cautiously opened a single *battant*, Greville saw him stoop and whisper to Madame de Rostanges, who was seated near the *bergère* in which reclined the emaciated figure of the invalid. But he saw no more. Tears obscured his eyes as they rested upon the careworn face and wasted form of the gentle Sophie. The involuntary gesture which marked her anxiety lest the arrival of a stranger should occasion a pernicious shock to the sufferer, contained an epitome of her history.

In another moment, Greville was seated in the chair placed for him beside the *bergère* of the Marquis, whose burning but attenuated hand lay folded in his own. No need to express sympathy,—no need to avow contrition!—The most careless observer must have perceived that the countenance inclining over that thin

tremulous hand, was concealing tears of intense emotion.

“*Mon enfant,*” faltered the scarcely less agitated Marquis, (rendered conscious of the half century’s distance existing between their ages, by the approach of the last but best instructor,)—“*mon enfant,—vous êtes en retard !—*Had you delayed your kindness a short time longer, you would have found only the old man’s empty chair !”

Greville replied by a more fervent pressure of the hand about to withdraw itself from his grasp.

“Sophie !—have you not a word of greeting for your old friend ?”—resumed the Marquis, addressing his feeble accents to his wife.

“I have already assured Lord Greville of my satisfaction at seeing him here again,” replied Madame de Rostanges, confirming by her coldness the distance she had established between them by the formality of her reception ; imme-

diately recommencing with St. Sévron the conversation his arrival had interrupted.

“You are come, I trust, to pass the winter with us?”—anxiously demanded the invalid.

“An urgent matter of business brought me to Paris,”—stammered Greville, labouring to recover his self-possession. “But it is now so nearly completed, that I purpose returning to England in a few days.”

“No, no,—I cannot spare you yet!”—exclaimed the Marquis, turning towards him a face on whose paleness a feeble smile played like a mournful gleam of winter sunshine.—“You must stay and see the last of the old man. You must attend me to the churchyard.—I cannot spare you yet.”

“You accuse Lord Greville of having retarded his visit, my dear Rostanges,”—interposed St. Sévron, who, through his conversation with the Marchioness overheard every syllable that was passing,—“and now, you seem deter-

mined to drive him away.—Don't expect us to come and sit with you, my good friend, if you torture us by such painful allusions."

"I would fain prevent your *feeling* them painful,"—murmured the invalid.—"I wish you to contemplate my end with the same cheerful resignation I do myself. Surrounded by those who are dear to me,—soothed by the devoted attendance of the best of wives on my passage from a happy mortal state to a still happier immortal,—what right have I to repine at having reached the term of existence?—Think what my life has been for five years past!—Consider what intense domestic happiness has replaced the vain ambitions of public life, and the delusions of pleasure!—But for the warning reprehensions of sickness, I had perhaps so anchored myself to the joys of this world, that even the promises of eternity might not have reconciled me to the change!—All has been mercifully ordained. — Weaned by slow degrees from

earthly attachments, I have been summoned so gently that I have learned to contemplate my end as though it were that of another;—grateful for every added day,—yet humbly resigned that each should be the last.”

“If Eugénie were here, she would not allow you to exhaust yourself thus,” cried St. Sévron. “But it is the error of that best of wives you praise so highly, to let you do all you choose,—knowing you choose to do everything that is wrong.”

“Patience, patience, *gros Papa!*”—remonstrated the Marquis, attempting a playful gesture of the hand. “You have reprimanded me enough for to-day. I promise to offend no more. I was anxious only to convince this fellow, whom I used to love as a boy of my own, that the dying man for whom I see he feels such earnest pity is scarcely an object of commiseration.—And now, dear Greville,—tell me!—what was this matter of

business to which you allude?—Anything in which our poor assistance might have been available?”—

Succinctly, and with careful avoidance of all details likely to excite the shattered nerves of the invalid, Greville related the history of Anton' Amazzi, and the success which had crowned his interposition with government in behalf of the unfortunate Corsican.

“You always described your yacht to us, my dear lord, as such a marvel of order and subordination!” said the old man, after listening to his narrative. “Do you remember, Sophie, how you and your sister used to delight in mounting him upon his hobby and worming out of him the secrets of his Eastern and Grecian adventures?—I recollect, Greville, as if it were yesterday, your sitting between them one moonlight night, yonder under the acacia-tree, (of which the dried pods are now rustling so mournfully in the northern wind,) describing

the Grotto of Antiparos, and the Haidee who served as the guide of your adventures."

"For Heaven's sake, don't get him on the chapter of his travels!"—gaily interrupted St. Sévron, "or he will be coming cataracts and pyramids over us, till we are overwhelmed like Pharaoh and all his host."

"Envious man!—did we not listen patiently last year to your Scottish adventures?" replied the Marquis, in the same tone.

"The more indulgently, perhaps," observed Madame de Rostanges, "because, after the overacted enthusiasm of Monsieur de Cerny and Frédéric de St. Pierre, St. Sévron's calmer mood of admiration restored us to conceit with ourselves."

"You were disappointed, then, in England?"—demanded Greville, turning towards St. Sévron, and hoping to generalise the conversation.

"On the contrary, my expectations were not

exorbitant, and completely satisfied. I respected, in the little busy English ant-hill, its industry, legislation, and intelligence. Refinement of taste or vastness of grandeur were not what I came to seek."

"I am too slightly acquainted with my native country to attempt her eulogium," replied Greville. "While her title to solids remains undisputed, let who will quarrel with her superlatives!"

"I expected no less of you, my dear lord,—albeit (*soit dit en passant*) such moderation be a rare merit among your countrymen. Next to the Americans, your nationality is the most thin-skinned in the world. You will not hear it hinted that you have not achieved perfection,—which effectually bars out all prospect of improvement."

"Like other chidden children, we rebel against the teacher, but amend our fault," said Greville.

“How is it possible to amend a fault when, like the deaf adder, you refuse to hear the voice of the charmer by whom it is revealed? In that respect, you pay the penalty of your insular position, — the source of so many triumphs. Your island is a *cul-de-sac*,—you lead to nothing!—Paris lies on the great highway of Europe; hourly traversed by foreigners of all nations and qualifications, each of whom flings a stone at one or other of our national abuses. Our language being cosmopolitan, *we* are compelled to listen to the sarcasms of either hemisphere. The foreigners who find their way into England, on the contrary, are either poor refugees, as meek as pauperism can make them; or *roué* fashionables, who visit Epsom, Melton, and Newmarket, but return without having been within leagues of Birmingham and Liverpool, Oxford and Cambridge, or forming the most remote guess at your institutions.”

“We are beginning to lead to something,”

remarked Greville, cheerfully. "The establishment of steam navigation on the Atlantic, attracts a wholly different class of strangers across the ant-hill."

"So much the better, *mon cher*,—so much the better!—If travel tend to liberalize individuals,—an influx of travellers is necessary to render the advantage national. The fault I find with English society, is the circumscription of its philosophy. Don't exclaim!—I do not dispute your foresightedness in science or ethics. I dare say you discover more planets than other people; and by the intensity of your penal legislation, you have perhaps invented a crime or two. But in matters of less import, you are sadly in want of spectacles. In matters of less import, the vista is bounded on every side by the narrow limits of your insularity. You are bitter enemies to innovation. Your moral custom-house is terribly intent upon imposing duties on foreign imports. You would not,

perhaps, put Galileo to death; but we have all beheld your press attempt the lapidation of originators of systems eventually adopted by the nation."

"We are certainly opposed to unnecessary reforms,"—Greville was beginning—

"Admire the leaven of Toryism breaking out in the hereditary peer!" interrupted St. Sévron,—whose object in the discussion was to divert the attention of the Marquis from his own ailments. "All English lords ought to be inoculated with it in their infancy, to secure having it in a mild way; for, taken after one-and-twenty, the mark becomes indelible. That clap-trap word, 'the wisdom of our ancestors,' is safer as a rattle in the hands of a child, than as a sledge-hammer in the hands of a man."

"I don't mean to be affronted," interposed Greville, laughing,—“and therefore hope that you don't mean to be too saucy.”

“The English Tory has not much to fear from the legitimists of the Faubourg!” observed the invalid.

“You have seen something now, my dear Greville,” added the Count, after stooping to adjust a cushion under the feet of the Marquis, “of the various shades of society in Paris.—Admit that the ready colloquiality of my countrymen tends to the enlargement of their ideas and extension of their views? To produce a spark, flint must strike against steel; whereas your learned recluses, buried in their quarry, lend little aid toward the enlightenment of mankind.”

“Dreading, perhaps, the fearful enlightenment produced by a general conflagration!”—added Greville, almost nettled.

“A genuine John Bullism,—the first I ever heard you utter!”—cried St. Sévron.—“Excellent, as an aphorism, for the leading article of an unliberal or illiberal journal;—excellent as a pebble-stone in the sling with which your

political shepherd attacks the champion of the Philistines ;—but unworthy the scholarly lips of an Oxonian fresh from the plain of Marathon and the schools of Athens. By the way, did you, in the East, encounter our excellent Lamartine, who must have been tottering there in his go-cart, about the same time as yourself?”

Greville replied in the negative, and without any expression of regret.

“ I have outlived the influence of poetry,” said he, “ and not yet achieved that of politics. Lamartine appears to me equally feeble as a poet and politician ; especially since he has taken the affairs of the East under his protection, much on the grounds of the school-girl who affected agony at the invasion of Spain, because her cousin played on the Spanish guitar !”—

“ I agree with you, that the East deserves better of us than to be namby-pambyed away by poeticising politicians, or vulgarized by stock-jobbing speculators,” cried St. Sévron, earnestly.

“ One might almost fancy the tortures of our martyrs atoned, by the excruciation of treaties and protocols with which we are tormenting the last moments of Paganism.”

“ Hush, hush!—I hear the light steps of Eugénie traversing the drawing-room,” exclaimed Madame de Rostanges.—“ My sister interdicts politics as fatal to the atmosphere of a sick-room,” she continued, turning towards Greville, who had abruptly risen at the announcement, and was already taking leave of the invalid, with promises to return on the morrow.

A cold salutation was exchanged on the threshold of the saloon between the departing guest and the beautiful woman, advancing with easy dignity to offer her morning consolations to her brother-in-law. In another moment, the door had closed upon Lord Greville.

CHAPTER VII.

Avec ses révélations je brouillerais cent familles.

MICHEL RAYMOND.

GREVILLE was stung to the heart by the studied coldness of the sisters. If conscious of a fault in having presumed on the imputed levity of her nation, to address Madame de Rostanges with insulting declarations, the error had been long ago forgiven;—while the still deeper offence of ingratitude towards Eugénie, was effaced by her happy union with another.

It was unworthy of them, therefore, to pursue

him with tardy retribution, as well as unaccordant with the indulgent forbearance imparting a peculiar charm to the society of the French. Impossible to be less vindictive;—impossible to be more *facile à vivre*. Unless among the natives of their meridional provinces, nothing so rare as an act of revenge. The passions of the Parisians are obliterated by their vices;—as the surface of a field of standing corn evinces little token of the furrows beneath.

“There is something almost ungenerous in the sense of superiority displayed in their deportment!” cried Greville, as he drove impetuously from the Rue St. Dominique towards the desolate Boulevard des Invalides, for the assuagement of his irritation. It needed all the feminine devotedness of Sophie,—all the denial conveyed in the career of her wedded life to the aspersions with which foreigners appropriate all Parisiennes of high caste established by a *mariage de convenance*, to leave him in charity, even with her virtues.

“ I hope you were coming to leave a card at my house ? ” cried the Duchesse de St. Pierre, suddenly stopping her splendid equipage and confronting the bleak air of a wintry day to accost him.—“ Not for *me* ! — Don’t fancy I am in the habit of exacting ceremonious devotions. But my mother, having heard of your being in Paris, has once or twice inquired why you no longer frequent our Faubourg Society. It would vex me to be obliged to own that you like us less than formerly.”

“ I will do myself the honour of writing my name for Madame de Rostanges,” replied Greville, touching his hat by way of adieu to the lovely *lionne* of the Rue de Varennes.

“ No such thing ! — Come to-night to her Boston, and you will please her twenty times as much. We have no little flirting Russian Countesses for you ; but the Clermonts and St. Sévrons will probably look in.”

Lord Greville of course drove straight to the Hotel de St. Pierre, to leave cards for the Duke

and Duchess, as well as for the Dowager, so as to exempt himself from the necessity of keeping his engagement. His last appearance in the circle of the venerable Marchioness de Rostanges had left too painful a trace upon his memory!—and having determined to limit his stay in Paris to a day or two, there was less occasion for his observance of the strictness of Faubourg etiquette. But for an engagement of the most peremptory nature, he would have quitted Paris that very evening.

He felt it incumbent upon him to appear at the ball of the Duchess of Orleans: the moderate dimensions of the Prince Royal's apartments in the Pavillon de Marsan rendering it impossible for the absence of an invited guest to escape notice. He had already ventured a careless inquiry of St. Sévron whether they should meet at the ball; the Count's earnest ejaculation of "God forbid!" serving at once to remind him that Eugénie, by her marriage,

had re-entered the lists of pure Carlism, and that he should be at least free from the gêne of her presence. If equally assured that the pretty face and fine diamonds of Madame de Kersakoff would be spared from a fête peculiarly consecrated to the claims of brilliancy and beauty, he would have assumed his uniform with almost the expectation of a pleasant evening.

Unembarrassed by the peculiar ties which beset every movement of the King, even in the trifling details of hospitality, the Duke and Duchess of Orleans, on pretext of want of accommodation, have assumed the envied privilege of assembling round them only the élite of the great bodies of the state; completing their circle with all that is most distinguished of the foreign nobility visiting Paris. The peculiarly gracious manners of the Duchess, which, though taxed by the Faubourg with the banality of German courtliness, are essentially French and French of the best order, have excused,

even to the ultra liberals, who still demand conciliation in Paris, some return towards the etiquettes of the *ancien régime* ; and an *entrée* to the fêtes of the Pavillon Marsan is consequently almost as much in request as when, in his bachelorhood, a smile from the Prince Royal sufficed to confer a diploma of beauty.

“ *Faisons notre entrée ensemble !* ” said Achille de Cerny, who happened to ascend the staircase at the same moment with Lord Greville. “ We are in good time ; for behold Monsieur de Rambuteau—the most punctual of men and administrators, who gets through twice as much business while other people are asleep as other people when awake, and four times as much business when other people are awake as any four of us put together,—a hint I afford you, *en passant*, to explain the common belief that *ce bon Préfet* is ubiquitous ; or, as one of your Irish senators Irishly observed, that, like a bird, he manages to be in two places at once. I left him just now at the Minister of Finance’s,—

buried, as I thought, under a wagon-load of the arguments of that weighty statesman. But, behold, he is risen from the dead, and is here before me !”—

Though Greville had offered no interruption to Cerny's chattering, not a syllable reached his ear. As they slowly ascended the illuminated staircase, his eyes were fixed upon a party of ladies who were disengaging themselves from their shawls in the gallery.

Could there exist in Paris *two* such nobly-proportioned forms as the one before him and the bride of Tristan de St. Sévron ?—Were there *two* women who ventured to encircle their marble brows with a simple braid of raven hair, like the beautiful creature who now stood patiently waiting till her coquettish companions had smoothed their ruffled plumes, preparatory to their trying entrée into the presence of royalty?

“ I could have sworn that was Madame de St. Sévron who went in just now !” said he, incoherently addressing his companion.

“ Madame de St. Sévron at the Duke of Orleans’s ball? — My dear friend, the stones of the Pavillon would rise and prate of her whereabouts. Reflect that her mother was *dame d’honneur* to Madame !”

“ All that sort of prejudice seems to be so rapidly disappearing.” —

“ Among those too young to have taken a part in public life before the accession of the present dynasty,” replied Cerny. “ *My* people, for instance, are legitimists; but I was the class-fellow of the Duc de Chartres, and loved him as much as I respect the courage and talents of Louis Philippe. But St. Sévron ! — St. Sévron, who followed Charles X. to Rambouillet ! — St. Sévron, who made a pilgrimage to Goritz ! — St. Sévron, the nephew of the Duc de Mont-hémont !”

“ Nevertheless,” interrupted Greville, catching sight, through the doors of the antechamber, of the interior of the ballroom, “ I swear to you

that Madame de St. Sévron is here ! Look !—next to the lady in a brocaded dress !”

“ *Mon cher*, you are demented !—*That* is Madame de Senneval, wife of one of his Royal Highness’s *officiers d’ordonnance*.”

“ On the other side of Madame de Senneval, —to the right !”

“ In the white dress, with bouquets of natural camellias ?—Where have you been dining ?—Has the Madeira of the club gone too hard with you ? *That* is Mademoiselle de Nangis.—She accompanied Madame de Senneval, who is related, you know, to the Rostanges people.”

“ Mademoiselle de Nangis ?”—

“ Come, come !—don’t pretend to mystify me in this fashion. I saw you drive out of the courtyard, in the Rue St. Dominique, only this morning.—*You must* have known she was to be here.—*Mais silence !*—The Duke and his brothers are approaching.”

If the coherency of poor Greville had ap-

peared questionable to Achille de Cerny, what had not the Princes a right to infer from the extraordinary equivocations and contradictions with which he acknowledged their courteous greeting!—In reply to the Duke of Orleans's questions, he said he was to leave Paris on the morrow, on his way to Marseilles;—in reply to the Duc de Nemours, that he should be in London in a day or two, for the meeting of parliament;—and if he did not declare to the Prince de Joinville that he was about to sail for Kamskatcha in a whaler, it was by some miraculous interposition of common sense. He neither recollected where he was, nor whom he was addressing.

When the Princes had successively glided off, leaving him free for the prosecution of his inquiries, Cerny was no longer beside him.—In what direction was he gone?—And how might he venture to accost any other person with the puerile questions of—“Is Eugénie de Nangis still unmarried? and who, in the name of all that is

mysterious, is the bride of the Comte Tristan de St. Sévron ?"—

His mind still distracted by uncertainty, and his eyes fixed upon the person of the lovely being who, whether married or single, was the *point de mire* of the assembly, Greville felt his colour come and go, and his heart beat almost to agony against his bosom. As she stood there smiling, serene, unconscious, full of sweetness, majesty, and grace, it seemed as if their mutual position were entangled in the disjointed imagery of a dream !—

The music now struck up. The Queen, as the guest of her royal daughter-in-law, had taken her place at the right hand of the Duchess ; and to the set formed immediately before them, Eugénie was led by Count Rodolph A——, the *coryphée* of the *beau danseurs* of Paris. Nothing so easy as to inquire of almost any one near him, “ Is *that* Mademoiselle de Nangis dancing with Rodolph A—— ? ” Yet Greville remained speechless. His tongue seemed cleaving to his palate.

“After all,” was his final reflection, as he watched the chaste movements of Eugénie, who, both for her beauty’s sake and as dancing opposite to the Princesse Clémentine, attracted general attention,—“after all, what should I gain by learning that she is free?—Would the obstacle the less exist which renders our union impossible?—As much divided from her as if she were in truth the wife of St. Sévron, my former repinings would only recur with redoubled violence!”—

And straightway accosting Ferdinand de Valsan, who stood watching the dancers, braced into a puppet by the old-fashioned formality of his auditor’s uniform, he suddenly inquired the name of his favourite partner, the pretty bride of the Faubourg.

“You must have a short memory,” replied Valsan, shewing his pearly teeth. “The pretty bride is Madame la Comtesse de St. Sévron.”

“Madame la Comtesse de St. Sévron, *née*—” persisted Greville, with ill-assumed unconcern.

“ *Née* Chaulieu,—sister of the Prince de Chaulieu, who was nearly killed at the last steeple chase.”

Greville had no leisure to remark the curious modes afforded by the phases of modern society for acquiring fame or notoriety ! He was occupied in reviling the stupidity displayed in the strange series of misconceptions in which he had involved himself !—

“ I am no dancer, as I need not remind you,” he whispered, abruptly addressing Mademoiselle de Nangis, the moment she was brought back by her partner, Count Rodolph, to the care of her chaperon, who had taken her place on the sofa, preserving, as is customary throughout the evening at French balls, a place beside her for her charge. And there was such a sudden outburst of joyousness in his looks, such a tremulousness of delight mingled with the frankness of his address, that Eugénie saw in a moment some unusual occurrence had taken place.

“ Do you fancy I expect you to offer your-

self to me as a partner?"—she replied, her own reserve giving way under the influence of his sudden effusion.

"I wished to excuse my presumption in entreating you at least to accept my arm when Madame de Senneval repairs to the refreshment-room?"—

"I scarcely think she will leave her place,—certainly not till the royal family are moving," replied Eugénie.

Undismayed by this evasive answer, Greville loitered near the spot; and when the Queen and Duchess of Orleans rose to repair to the second dancing-room, in order to keep the guests equally distributed between both, Lord Greville again pressed forward with an offer of his services. But the young chaperon was engaged to dance, and had no thoughts of venturing into the refreshment-room.

Mademoiselle de Nangis, however, seemed to compassionate the evident desire of Greville to approach her more nearly. "When Ma-

dame de Senneval begins to valse," said she, "we will stand up and look at the dancing. Do you remember how, in my rash girlhood, I used to shock the poor dear old Princesse de Chaulieu by defying our French anathema against waltzing?—I have since given up in disgust what I believe I only attempted in contradiction!"—

"You relieve me from my sole regret at my want of skill as a *valseur*," observed Greville, lowering his voice, and gratefully accepting the arm which, on the first signal from the orchestra, she placed within his own. "From your mode of alluding to the Princesse, I infer that she is no more?"

"Are you ignorant that Sidonie was left to my brother-in-law's guardianship,—residing with us at Les Etangs from the period of becoming an orphan?—It was there her marriage with our friend St. Sévron was arranged."—

"Were I to acknowledge the full extent of my ignorance or misunderstanding concern-

ing St. Sévron and his marriage, I could not hope you would believe me!"—cried he. "Yet *who* might not believe anything, after seeing him transfer his affections from—"

"*Assez, assez!*"—interposed Eugénie, forestalling the intended compliment. "St. Sévron had little share in the transfer. We were fortunate in persuading him to secure the happiness of his cousin, my friend Sidonie, who had been long attached to him, and will make him as good a wife as Sophie has made to his poor friend."

"For *his* sake may it prove so!" exclaimed Greville, earnestly. "But I must be excused from complimenting him on the exchange. It is, however, scarcely to be wondered at that the friends of the Marquis de Rostanges should be readily induced into matrimony."

"His friends, if gifted with common sense, must be aware that women like Sophie are rare in the world," rejoined Eugénie, with still warmer earnestness. "Even you, who are well ac-

quainted with my sister,—even I, who have lived my whole happy life in her company,—might still find cause for admiration in the indifference to self which marks every action of her life.—People sometimes enlarge to me upon the sacrifice she makes in abstaining from scenes like these, to become the nurse of her infirm husband!—Far greater would be the sacrifice, were she compelled to leave him to the care of servants. You can form no idea of his attachment, his gratitude, his appreciation of her excellencies! If such a thing as love exist on earth, it must surely consecrate a tie such as binds those twain to each other.”

Greville could not refrain from a slight pressure of the arm linked within his own, as he listened to these allusions. But Eugénie had every excuse for attributing the movement to the intensity of the throng crowding round the waltzers.

“Your little friend, Madame de Kersakoff, attracts so much attention by her incomparable

waltzing," said she, "that we shall be crushed to death if we remain among the spectators."

Though vexed at this summary dismissal, Greville's heart bounded within him at the expression, "Your little friend, Madame de Kersakoff." Eugénie had clearly watched his proceedings at their first meeting; or, if related to her by others, they had retained some hold on her recollection. If he dared but hope that she had experienced a moment's jealousy of Madame de Kersakoff!

Madame de Senneval, who, as a *lionne*, was considerably in request as a partner, now returned to her seat. But as she was not likely long to retain her post of *surveillance*, Greville, happier than he had felt at any moment since he entered Paris, or rather, at any moment since he quitted it, stationed himself in a doorway commanding the place occupied by Mademoiselle de Nangis, and had the satisfaction of seeing her refuse, in succession, the most distinguished partners in the room. Several gene-

ral officers approached her, with the kindest inquiries after the health of the Marquis; and in reply to these, her manner was tempered with a degree of deference very different from her style of addressing the *lions*, native or foreign, who attempted to dazzle her with the splendour of their uniforms and the *fatuité* of their smiles. Much as Greville was impressed by the superior address of Frenchwomen in general, and Sophie and her sister in particular, as contrasted with the half-shy, half-proud reserve of the English, which, even when worn away by much converse with the world, leaves behind a frank abruptness far from fascinating to strangers,—never had he been so struck as that evening; or, perhaps, never had Eugénie been actuated in his presence by such an inward sense of happiness as that which now lent colour to her cheek and conciliation to her manners. Every one hailed the change in her appearance by the usual phrase of society,—that “*Mais-moiselle de Nangis was en triomphe.*”

But if others were captivated by the charm of her radiant countenance and gracious deportment, what was *he* who had some right to arrogate to his own influence the working of the spell?—At the close of that brilliant ball, she accepted a second time his arm on their way to the carriage; and as the delays consequent upon the simultaneous breaking up of royal balls kept them waiting nearly an hour for the announcement of the carriage, a few of those detached exclamations which convey so much more than the common course of conversation, betrayed to each, the happy state of feeling of the other.

“What a charming ball!”—Ferdinand de Valsan observed to Lord Greville, as he swept by triumphantly, with Madame de Kersakoff, whose glittering diadem and gloomy face seemed at that moment singularly at variance.

“The only pleasant fête I have been at this year!” was his rejoinder;—a rejoinder attri-

buted by the vain Valsan to the admiration conceded to Greville's personal attractions by those to whom he devoted so little homage in return.

“ I came hither with very little expectation of being amused,” Greville had heard Eugénie reply, on the other hand, to the interrogations of one of her numerous *adoreurs*. “ My sister insisted on my accompanying Madame de Senneval. Even till the last moment, I resisted.— But how shall I sufficiently thank her, on my return, for having procured me so charming an evening !”—

A few minutes before, Mademoiselle de Nan-gis, on missing her bouquet, now withered and faded, had searched for it more eagerly than comported with her habitual serenity.

“ My dear Eugénie, I shall certainly interrogate Madame Adde concerning this precious bouquet !” cried Madame de Senneval. “ I noticed its beauty,—(*pompon* camellias of every shade !) and accused you of extravagance.—

I *now* begin, my dear, to accuse you of coquetry. It was clearly the gift of some one extraordinarily dear to you!"

"You have guessed right," she replied;—"it was the gift of poor Rostanges,—who, in the midst of his sufferings, was thoughtful enough to send to the Madeleine and order it for me. Frankly, however, I am desirous to preserve it rather as a memorial of the pleasures I have enjoyed here, than of his kindness, which is demonstrated in too many ways to require a memento."

No wonder that Greville, who, returning hastily from a pretended search after the withered flowers, overheard this flattering avowal, found it difficult to retire to rest on his return from the ball.

It was his custom, as it is that of most *élégants*, to prepare himself for the land of dreams with a cigar. The ethereal beings deified by the idolatry of society, little imagine, while listening to the impassioned whispers

of their adorers, how often their charms are recalled to mind,—their gentle words passed in review,—their graceful movements reconsidered,—through circling clouds of a genuine Havanah!—Enrolled in a comfortable dressing-gown, ensconced in an easy chair, encapped in an embroidered calotte, (the purchase of Abdallah in the bazaar at Cairo,) Greville, with an excellent cigar in his mouth, and Eugénie, not de Sévron, but de Nangis, in his heart of hearts, felt himself, that night, pretty nearly the happiest of mankind!—

Though situated much as when, on his arrival in Paris, he pronounced himself to be “the most wretched of the human race,” his recent experience of a yet darker despair made it suffice for his peace of mind that Eugénie was still free,—that she had even persisted, in spite of all persuasions, in retaining her freedom; and that he had some pretext for believing himself the object of her preference.

The sense of happiness brought with it, as in

all hearts nobly constituted, a renewal of the sense of duty and affection. Greville blushed to recollect how cruelly, during his recent season of despondency, he had neglected his mother ! On poor Lady Greville, he had been gratuitously inflicting the pangs to which he was himself a victim.

Many weeks had elapsed since he addressed a line to the Abbey. He had abstained from writing, chiefly lest he should excite her anxieties by the knowledge that he was in Paris ; intending to communicate, on his return to Marseilles, the peculiar circumstances which compelled him to visit the French capital. Apprehensive she might fancy he was renewing his intimacy with the Rostanges family, he remained studiously silent during his estrangement from them, though the news of Eugénie's supposed marriage would have brought a close to the cares of Lady Greville. And now, oh ! contradiction of human nature,—now that the mischief was again impending,—the danger again imminent,—he re-

solved to write to her before he slept!—In the overflowing of his joy, he longed to address the only human being who sympathized, heart and soul, in his joys and sorrows.—

Greville had, however, another object.—He wrote, not only to communicate the welcome news that his health was improved, and his spirits improving, but to throw himself on the mercy of the Countess.

“I do not ask you to relent in my favour,” said he. “Your world of England has for me an existence so unreal, that I must not pretend to depreciate the importance of public opinion, which, with my parents, has maintained such paramount force. But I implore you,—by all your tenderness lavished upon me in my infancy,—by your sufferings for my sake,—by your trust in my affection,—empower me to exonerate myself in the estimation of Sophie and her sister by an explanation of the peculiar circumstances forbidding me to claim the hand of Mademoiselle de Nangis! Suffer me to

confide in *her*, as you have confided in *me*. Trust to her prudence, mother—trust to her honour; but do not compel me to appear cold and ungrateful when my heart is overflowing with tenderness and love. Did you but know her, were you only able to appreciate the nobleness of her character, (how different from the pitiful worldliness of those you have sometimes pointed out to my preference!) you would admit her title to our confidence.

“ I await your answer to this application with earnest anxiety. Fear nothing from my rashness.—Till I receive your sanction, my lips are sealed.—Hard as it may be to restrain the avowal of my attachment, now that circumstances have betrayed me once more into association with those so dear to me, I renew my solemn engagement to secrecy, till your kindness shall decree my exemption. Do not, I beseech you, dearest mother, unreasonably prolong my suspense.”

CHAPTER VIII.

Of what is the old man thinking
As he leans on his oaken staff?—

HAYNES BAYLEY.

DURING these agitations of the Greville family, the world of gossipry in which the widowed Countess and her son maintained their pristine importance,—still valued at an earldom and forty thousand a-year,—was duly apprized, from time to time, by the same learned authorities which announced Lord Greville's original inauguration at the Clarendon Hotel, that, though contributing little to the pleasures

of society, they had not yet influenced to the gloomy statistics of the bills of mortality.

On occasion of the Countess's visit to town for medical advice, some six months after her son had sailed for the East, the newspapers rang their changes upon her arrival and departure, the motive of her coming and the order of her going, as if intimately in her ladyship's confidence ; and from that time till the present, she had figured once a month or so in their records, by assertions of a fact which nobody doubted,—that, “ During the absence of the young Earl, the Countess of Greville was still residing at Greville Abbey ;”—and eventually by an announcement which few people cared for,—that “ The Countess of Greville was about to remove from the family seat in Oxfordshire, to the favourite residence of Torquay, for the benefit of a milder climate.”

The Earl, on the other hand, was an immense favourite with the newsmongers, to whom the restlessness of his movements was an annuity.

There was something fanciful and picturesque in the record of his wanderings. Instead of the common-place vulgarity of progresses between Oxfordshire and Torquay, London and Brighton, *he* was the means of introducing into their columns names and designations savouring of myrrh, aloes, and cassia. When he arrived at Alexandria, they took care, with their usual accuracy, to inform their readers that “The Earl of Greville, in his beautiful yacht the *Antelope*, had arrived at Smyrna, with the intention of pursuing his researches in Anatolia;”—and while spending the following summer in Egypt, and wintering at Cairo, there was no end to their details of his travels in the Caucasus and his charming winter residence at Damascus. During his illness at the Convent of St. Catherine, “they were under the painful necessity of announcing the dangerous illness of that respected young nobleman the Earl of Greville, who had been landed at Castel-a-mare, under an attack of brain fever.”

From these materials, the gossips of Great Britain fabricated a web, the texture of which there was no one to call in question. They decided that the noble minor, having rebelled against the despotism of his mother, was wearing away in foreign travel his impatience of her assumed authority at Greville Abbey. Some went so far as to surmise a *passion malheureuse* for some Coptic beauty, or the daughter of a Levantine consul. Others pronounced the mysteriously unknown nobleman to be a misanthrope, with some tendency towards Moslemism. In certain cerulean coteries, rumours were even circulated that he was to turn out a second Childe Harold; packets having been received by Murray from Alexandria, countersigned by her Majesty's consul for Syria, bearing on the seals an earl's coronet surmounting a stag passant, the crest of the house of Greville.

The great majority, however, more especially that portion of it composed of the squirearchy

of the shire of Oxford, recalled to mind in private and to their neighbours in public, that the Earl, if eccentric, was no worse than his father; that the late Lord Greville, in early youth a libertine, had become sullen and reserved in his maturity,—*comme le diable qui, étant vieux, s'est fait hermite*;—that during his reign Greville Abbey was lost to the county,—that its preserves and gardens were not kept up, as now;—and that, so far from finding fault with the absence of mind of the Countess and body of the Earl, the game was twice as plentiful, and the shooting thrice as come-at-able, now that Dowdeswell was sole lord of the ascendant.

Nor were the tenants less satisfied. Their interests were better cared for by a provident agent than by one who, on reaching his country seat, might perhaps have left his heart behind him at Almack's, and his money at Crockford's.

It is amusing to observe how readily a county appropriates to itself, in the absence of the proprietor, the grandeurs of his seat. During the

sojourn of Lady Greville in Italy, her neighbours had crowded to contemplate the pictures and statues, and enjoy the park and gardens, of the Abbey, till they almost fancied them public property ;—talking of them at least as freely as of the National Gallery, and sketching the old oaks, and the deer grouped under them, as they might have done those of Richmond or Windsor.

And now, the system, interrupted by the Countess's return, was renewed in consequence of her sojourn in Devonshire. Squeamington began once more to pour its Sunday crowd into the avenues, to carve true-lovers' knots on the bark of the beech-trees, and sow chicken-bones and crumbs of gingerbread under its spreading cedars. They cared no more for the two Portland-stone rhinoceroses, the supporters of the family arms, figuring over the gateway of the grand entrance, as a token of proprietorship, than for the same emblazonment engraved in the pages of Lodge or Burke ; and if Dowdeswell, by advice of Lord Brooks, still issued

cards of permission to fish the waters or shoot in the outlying preserves, it was more to secure the trout and pheasants from bolder depredation, than to serve the electioneering interests of the family. It is true, Squeamington lay too near at hand to admit of the noble house of Greville calling either house or grounds its own ; but it was not till Greville betook himself to Jericho beyond Jordan, and his mother to the mild pluviosities of the shire of Devon, that the borough felt certain of having the best of it.—

The market-place and its gossips were a little mortified, however, that Lord Greville afforded them such insufficient data for a novel in three volumes, worthy the greasy, marble-coloured tomes of its half-pay circulating library. All they knew of him, of late years, was his anchorage in harbours with unpronounceable names, and the report that he had been seen in a fez, “surrounded by heathen turks and blackymores, on the top of the purramids of Egypt,” his heart hardened, like Pharaoh’s, by exposure to so

sultry a sky; and, with the exception of the Earl his father, no one was a greater stranger in the borough than the Right Hon. Hugo, Earl of Greville.

Anodyne, so long as his patroness resided at the Abbey, used to reply with oracular mystery to the inquiries of the Squeamingtonians, whether my lord were ever likely to settle at home like other lords, with a lady as the act directs, and a progressive number of little Grevilles as per law established. But now that the Countess was settled in Devonshire, there was no possibility of pretending to know more on the subject than his neighbours; and he was forced to content himself with the same wish for the new proprietor of the Abbey, as for the walls of his new surgery,—that they might settle speedily, and not prove cracked beyond redemption.

Of all the neighbourhood, however, old Massingberd was most to be pitied. He had lost Lady Greville,—first as a butt, and lastly

as a friend; and had to deplore at once the dissoluteness of his son and the failure of his system. The delight of his life had been, to bring up his boy as a living antithesis to the darling of the Abbey. In whatever particulars Greville was restricted, Fred had been indulged;—wherever Greville had been instructed, Fred was left ignorant. The Countess chose to make a puritan of her son,—the squire was pleased that *his* should be a rake;—so at least it might be inferred from the severity with which the follies of boyhood were checked in Greville, while in Frederick, old Massingberd overlooked even the vices of a man!—

To conceal his faults, when too heinous to be overlooked, the old gentleman had encumbered his estates and inconvenienced his family. Having paid off his daughters' fortunes, he seemed to think himself privileged to render his own and his wife's old age as comfortless as accorded with the exactions of their only son; and now, after all his sacrifices,—cheerful sacrifices—sacrifices

with which he had never reproached the graceless Frederick, — instead of recognising the loving-kindness of such a father, the roué of St. James's Street seemed to think it an infamous thing that his parents should have no more estates left to mortgage! — It was only in patriarchal times that prodigal sons were simple enough to feed on husks. — In our day, the father of the prodigal becomes the swine-herd, — leaving the unrepentant sinner to feast by anticipation on the fatted calf, and pay for it with a post obit! —

All this distressed poor old Massingberd more than he cared to own; — for if his manners were plain, and his sense far from plain, he was a man of feeling and honour. It grieved him sore to find that his son had imposed claims upon him which he was unable to meet; and, above all, that in spite of the unlimited indulgence accorded to his follies, Frederick had played the hypocrite with home far more than the tyran-

nized victim of Greville Abbey. The tough-hearted old squire rejoiced that the graceless fellow kept away from Oxfordshire, *not* lest he should reprove him too hastily, but lest he should again prove weak in indulgence towards one so cruelly ungrateful!—

The old servants, (the butler had been discharged, but there was still a grey-headed footman hobbling in attendance, and an old housekeeper mumbling over her duties,) — the old servants noted with tearful eyes, that the squire often sent away his dinner untouched; and that the village tailor had been twice requested to put back the buttons of his waistcoat, a world too wide for his shrunk waist. He was observed to pace along the shrubberies after dusk, shuffling through the dead leaves, which the dismissal of the second gardener occasioned to collect in the gravel walks. Mas-singberd's hearty laugh no longer enlivened the quorum; his favourite mare had stood dead

lame in the stable for months, without so much as a visit from his master ; and he sometimes leaned so heavily on the ledge of his pew in church, hiding his face with his hands as he listened to the exhortations of the gospel, that the old women of the parish muttered among themselves as how the squire must have summut on his conscience, or a sore pain aching in his heart.

What signified ?—Grey-headed squires in fustian coats are made to kick about dead leaves in shrubberies, and to wax sorrowful or soporific during afternoon service. Grey-headed squires are the proverbial butts of dramatists and novelists, and the chartered victims of spendthrift sons. What was old Massingberd but the zero, good to impart value to the figure of Fred?—If any one had reason to complain, it was the son, spoiled by his bad management, and ruined by his doating indulgence. Mrs. Massingberd often said as much to her neighbours at the Vicarage, and wrote as much to her daughter

Julia, at Cobham Park. She would have said more, perhaps, had she been trusted with more ; but her broken-hearted husband buttoned his griefs within his redundant waistcoat, while her callous-hearted son kept his secrets as hermetically sealed as his case of cigars.

Meanwhile the Earl, so earnestly speculated upon by the manufacturers of “fashionable changes,” and portionless daughters, and so modestly cared for by hewers of his own woods and drawers of his own fish-ponds, was an object of warm interest in the little circle he had selected as his own. His return to the Faubourg was hailed as a reconquered country is cherished by its original possessor, the more for alienation. Had he been a Frenchman, to the manner of Carlism born, they would not, of course, have pardoned his devotion to the reigning family. But even the Faubourg is liberal enough to admit that purism in politics is not to be exacted of a foreigner !—

His own satisfaction while awaiting the result of his application to his mother was of a far more temperate quality. Restored to all his former favour at the Hotel de Rostanges, he dared not permit himself to profit daily and hourly by his privilege, as of yore ; and his visits were even then a source of as much pain as pleasure. Every moment some sentiment to be repressed, as unfit for the solemn presence of the dying,—every moment some tearful glance to be concealed, as conveying to the invalid a too palpable avowal of his danger. In such a spot nothing is done naturally, nothing is said frankly. It was only Sophie who seemed in her element ; her soft and angelic nature being expressly congenial with the task of soothing the afflicted, and, like a spirit of peace, shedding light over the sadness of the sepulchre.

St. Sévron, indeed, had courage to be habitually cheerful in the presence of the poor Marquis ; but the exertion was dedicated to the solace of the living, rather than the consolation of

the dying. The kind-hearted old man had exacted it of his friend.

“These poor children lead a wretched life with me,” said he, one day, after having forced Sophie and Eugénie to take an airing, on St. Sévron’s promise to bear him company during their absence. “If you would prove your friendship to me in my last moments be it by devoting yourself to *them*. I can’t bear to see them sad,—sadness will bring sickness, and it is enough for one of the family to be a sufferer. If you love me, dear St. Sévron, come hither every day with a cheerful face, and make young Greville bear you company as often as you can. Your reason and his rhyme, united, restore cheerfulness to this poor dreary house. It is asking almost too much of you, to resign an hour in the twenty-four of your new-born happiness ; but your happiness will abide, and your old friend is departing.”

“Not another word !” was St. Sévron’s reply, enforced by a fervent pressure of the hand ; and,

from that day, he was religiously punctual in his visits. When their discourse became too grave for his bride, whose young head was still giddy with some ball of the preceding night, Madame de St. Sévron would beckon away Eugénie, and steal with her to her own apartment, unwilling to influence the pursuits of those among whom, at such moments, she felt her girlishness to be out of place.

An admirable trait in the domestic manners of the French, is their forbearance with the sick, and their respect for the old. The Prince de Chaulieu, Albert de la Roche Aymar, and other young men of fashion, who had frequented the Hotel de Rostanges in its days of feasting, did not neglect to pay their respects to the sick-room, with news of the clubs, and the first rumours of political intelligence. Even the lively Duchesse de St. Pierre, and Madame Jules de la Roche Aymar, were unwearied in their efforts to amuse *ce pauvre père Rostanges* with chit-chat and scandal. To gratify his

musical predilections, they often persuaded their accomplished friend Madame de Sparre to cheer his solitary hours with those soul-searching romances by which she is enabled to extract tears from pagan Jews, and the world-seared eyes of the *grandes dames* of the Faubourg.

On such occasions, Greville was pretty sure to find himself, contrary to all his good resolutions, attracted to the side of Mademoiselle de Nangis. Music is a powerful stimulant to the sympathies of affection; and whenever *la charmante Caroline* gave rise to “thoughts that do lie too deep for tears” by her impassioned declination of *l'Exilé du Pays*,—

Jamais de moi tu n'auras
Une parole amère !
L'enfant qu' éloigne sa mère
Pleure, et ne la maudis pas !—

came home to him with almost too painful an intensity.

St. Sévron, however, kept active watch on the proceedings of the sick-room; and, by his

entreaties, Madame de Sparre was usually induced to prefer gayer strains, such as the piquancy and refinement of her taste redeems from the triviality of the *chansonnette*.

“While listening in your presence to these dear and familiar airs,” whispered Greville to Eugénie, with whom he was standing one day apart from the circle, in the embrasure of one of the windows overlooking the garden,—“I can scarcely believe that so much time and sorrow have intervened since we last heard them here together.”

“Do you remember,” replied Mademoiselle de Nangis, in the same low tone, and instinctively turning away her eyes from the ardent gaze of Greville, “that I was standing with my sister in this very window, when you came to announce your sudden departure for England, on a plea which we *then* deemed supposititious?”

“You did me grievous wrong!—But you had some excuse for an unkind interpretation of my

actions !”—observed Greville, in a saddened voice.—“ I had sinned past all forgiveness, save that of an angel. God knows whether I have since atoned for a brief moment of bewilderment !”—

“ We heard of your illness in the East,” faltered Eugénie, alarmed by his emotion. “ Monsieur de Cerny, who, among other Anglicisms, has taken up yachting, brought tidings from the Mediterranean that your life was given over in Syria. Trust me, you had no reason to complain of want of interest among the Parisian friends to whom you afforded so little token of recollection !”—

“ They ought to have known,” rejoined Greville, with some effort to restrain himself within the formal boundaries of etiquette, “ that nothing but the existence of the most peremptory, the most solemn obligations, could induce me to support the odium of ingratitude. They ought to have surmised that the heart which

dared not prostrate its devotions at their feet, was breaking with afflictions of its own,—in banishment,—in solitude,—in——”

“ Silence, silence, my dear Greville !—Madame de Sparre is about to delight us with “ *La Folle !* ”—remonstrated St. Sévron, intent upon lowering the voice of his English friend, who, in the exaltation of his feelings, was placing the whole room in his confidence ; and nothing was left for him but to retire to a distant seat for the recovery of his composure, while Eugénie rejoined the circle collected round the piano, to listen to the story of the soldier’s maniac bride, “ *la romance dite par Madame de Sparre,* ” with the same touching simplicity we have heard the ballad of “ Robin Gray ” related by the Dowager Lady Essex.

Scarcely a person present could refrain from a thrill of horror at the burst of frenzied joy concluding the song ; save Greville, who was absorbed in devising sophistries to excuse to himself the anticipation of his mother’s sanction,

and the immediate disclosure to Eugénie of the peculiar circumstances influencing his conduct.

“Pity me!” whispered he to Mademoiselle de Nangis, in whose eyes the tears called forth by that admirable performance were still glistening, when the breaking up of the party compelled him to a reluctant farewell; “for honour and duty compel me to refrain from exonerating myself in your eyes!—Pity me still more that, even if exonerated,——” He paused. He could not persuade himself to avow the hopeless gloom by which his prospects were overclouded. A fervent pressure of the hand conveyed all he dared express of passionate attachment.

“I will return there no more!”—cried Greville,—when, on quitting the house, he pursued his way at an eager pace towards the Champs Elysées, for the relief of air and exercise, after the heated atmosphere of the Marquis’s apartments,—“I will return there no more!—But for the certitude of her marriage, I never would have hazarded a renewal of my intimacy with

the family. To see her thus familiarly,—to be ever watching her countenance for indications of a preference which, if it exist, must prove a source of wretchedness to both,—is worse than fruitless. Heaven knows it needs no nearer intimacy to convince me of the transcendence of her attractions.—I see—I know—I feel—that she is all the most fastidious man could desire in a wife. Beauty,—sense,—modesty, combined with proper pride,—tenderness concealed under the gentlest serenity,—all that adorns the character of woman, is united in Eugénie!—Had it been so ordained, how unimaginably happy might have been the ordering of our days!—The domestic life of England is the very existence to gratify her tranquil tastes. What a painting-room—what a music-room should have awaited her at the Abbey!—And then, our rides!—With what delight would she have studied the effects of our picturesque old forests, of the rich culture of our noble parks!—How new would it all have been to her;—and what

pleasure should I have found in pointing out the beauty of our scenery,—the glory of our institutions!—Above all, what triumph to prove to that insupportable crew of London chaperons, the possibility of defying the authority of their magic circle, in the choice of a wife! But wherefore befool myself with these fruitless retrospections?”—mused Greville, suddenly interrupting the chain of his meditations, on finding that he had pursued his eager way among the trees, nearly as far as the *Rond Point*,—“unless as a further conviction of my own weakness!—weakness how inconceivable, — since, after months of banishment and sickness, braved only in the hope of diminishing my attachment, I find myself again on the forbidden spot,—striving to renew the links of an almost broken chain!”——

Lord Greville’s reverie was here interrupted by a sudden burst of laughter,—of all interruptions the most provoking to a person sufficiently engrossed by painful reflections to feel that ab-

sence of mind may have betrayed him into some absurdity. Stopping short, he found himself accosted in English by two persons whom the deepening shades of a dull afternoon prevented him at the first moment from recognising.

“ St. George!” cried he at last, extending his hand cordially,—but still in doubt respecting his companion.

“ Don’t you remember my sister?”—cried Lord St. George, replying to his silence, rather than to his salutation. And the joyous voice of Lady Louisa Clare followed up the claim to recognition.

“ We have been watching you, my dear fellow, for the last ten minutes!” cried Lord St. George, after Greville had gone through the usual round of compliments and inquiries; “ Louisa will have it that you are studying French of some professor of the *Théâtre des jeunes Elèves*;—nor can I persuade her that the mutterings in which you were indulging, while

striding along yonder in the shade, were the mere rehearsal of your maiden speech. No getting her back to the carriage waiting at the end of the avenue, till we had ascertained the fact by personal inquiries !”—

“ Lady Louisa does me too much honour by interesting herself in my *gaucheries*,” said Greville ;—then, apprehensive of appearing oversusceptible, he added,—“ I must, however, throw myself on her indulgence by reminding her that if I disgrace myself by behaving like a savage, I am only just escaped from the wilderness. Ages have elapsed since I had the pleasure of meeting her in civilized London.”

“ Ah ! by the way,—the papers informed us you had turned Turk, or some such thing,” cried Lady Louisa, laughing, “and that you were becoming a loyal subject of the Caliph of Bagdad.”

“ On the contrary, our yachting fellows brought back word last summer that you were

lost in the cataracts of Upper Egypt, like Sam Patch, at Niagara!" cried Lord St. George, with the same familiar jocularity.

"I was certainly near dying in Egypt," observed Greville, about as much pleased to find that he had contributed to the hilarity of his friends, as that he should have to escort Lady Louisa back as far as the Place de la Concorde.

"But what on earth brings you to Paris?" cried St. George. "You have compelled *me* to own that Lou. and I have scuffled over to have a peep at the close of the carnival;—we have consequently a right to inquire what the deuce you are doing with yourself beside uttering incantations in the dusk among the trees and *marchands de gateaux de Nanterre*, in the Champs Elysées."

"Do you pretend to monopolize the right of having a peep at the pleasures of the carnival?" replied Greville, labouring to speak cheerfully.

"By no means. But unless you are strangely

altered, the carnival is not your *genre* ;—and as we did not find you at Lady G.'s soirée last night at the Embassy, where there was every human creature in Paris that calls itself world, —French or English, —I have no reason to suppose you fonder of the *comme il faut* than of the *comme il ne faut pas*."

"Why browbeat Lord Greville by such fierce cross-examination?" cried Lady Louisa ; "more especially as it is too dark to afford us the advantage of noticing the confusion of his countenance. Seriously, you must excuse our asking so many questions," she continued, addressing Greville in a more rational tone,—“for we have only been four-and-twenty hours in Paris ; and it is safer to expose our ignorance to an old friend, than disgrace ourselves in the eyes of strangers. You may perceive that I only venture out in the dusk, till Beaudrant enables me to replace my quizzical London bonnet ; nor does my brother dare to shew his face at the club till he has wormed out of *Les Guêpes* and

the newspapers, what *danseuse* he may allow himself to applaud, and whether Grisi is still in fashion."

"Lou has not lost her propensity for quizzing, you see, while you were eating locusts among the Arabs," cried Lord St. George. "But pray tell me, Grev, is your noble lordship as much as ever the *fleur des pois* of the noble Faubourg?—*You* are the only fellow I ever saw get on among Frenchwomen without dancing, and among Frenchmen without play."

"My course of locust-eating has not enabled me to supply those deficiencies," observed Greville. "I know as little of the four aces, or *les deux temps*, as before I pitched my tent under the cedars of Lebanon."

"Yet you are as faithful to your old haunts as I to mine!"—exclaimed St. George. "Paris is like a bad habit, which one throws aside for a time, but to which one is sure to return. Paris, to an idle man, is like opium-eating to a Turk, or betel-chewing to a Hindù,—an ineradicable

vice. Every spring, on arriving in London, I blow myself up, as if I were my own parent or guardian, for having wasted two months in Paris ; — and on taking up my old position at Crocky's, promise and vow to myself that I will never again be guilty of the same amiable weakness for *poulardes truffées* and *bals masqués*. Yet, before the end of the ensuing carnival, I am as sure to find my way back to the Hotel de Londres, as the wild goose to return from its migration at the appointed season !”

“ The *bals masqués* are *en décadence*, I fancy,” observed Greville ; “ I have not heard of any one going there this season.”

“ So it is said every season. But by the time *carême* arrives, one finds that every one has been there, either openly or *en cachette*. By the way, Grev, as you don't seem to have been there yourself, come with us to-night ! — You can't plead an engagement, you know ; — for, *passé minuit*, on a Saturday-night, nothing remains to be done but the *bal de l'opéra* ; and I shall

be really obliged to you to escort my sister, who would be identified if seen alone upon my arm."

"Surely Lady Louisa does not intend to venture into such a throng?" cried Greville, aghast.

"Indeed I do!" replied Lady Louisa Clare. "I am so tired of hearing St. George vaunt the delights of the *bal masqué*, that I am resolved to enjoy a glimpse of the motley scene."

"A glimpse does not suffice," cried her brother; "a glimpse of the *bal masqué*, seen from your box, would shew you only a scene which is anything but motley, being composed of black, ill-looking people,—not a bit more amusing than any other dirty mob. To judge of the humours of the place, you must mask yourself to the teeth, and submit to be asked impertinent questions, like the rest of us,—an alternative I do not recommend."

Lord Greville instantly suggested a few of

the thousand objections to such a project. "I have known other ladies experience a similar curiosity," said he; "but I never knew one of them return a second time. You have little idea of the annoyance to which you are about to expose yourself."

"Admire how plausibly he is shirking the party!"—cried Lady Louisa. "Better say at once, with proper emphasis, that an inevitable engagement prevents you the honour of devoting yourself this evening to the charming Lady Louisa Clare. *I* will let you off, though our lady of the Faubourg, it seems, will *not*."

'On the contrary, if you are determined on going," interrupted Greville, "my consolation will be, that you permit me to do my best towards securing you from the mischiefs of the place."

"A single turn will, I dare say, fully satisfy my curiosity," observed Lady Louisa. "Though long resolved to witness the humours of the carnival, I have hitherto let, 'I dare not,' wait

upon, 'I would.' *This* time, I am determined to be brave, since I can secure so invincible a knight. Come to us at twelve, at the Hotel de Londres, and we will proceed together. It will make a charming episode for Crockford's, in your next letter to Mr. Massingberd, that we endangered our fair fame by going *en partie fine* to the *bal de l'opéra*."

"I have no London correspondent to endanger any one's fair fame," said Greville, gravely; "nor have I heard a word of Fred Massingberd since I left England."

"Fred does not pretend to be a man of letters," cried Lord St. George, laughing. "I never knew him write anything beyond the limits of scented note-paper,—except a promissory note, or a fudgeration to the squire when hard up."

"And what has he been doing with himself of late?" demanded Greville.

"Playing the old game, I fancy," replied St. George; "talking big, and acting little. I

suspect poor Fred is on his last legs ; though, thanks to Inkson, the said last legs cut a tolerable figure in the world."

"What makes you think his affairs unprosperous?"

"Because he has been doing such splendid things lately,—like the extra shine of a fire-work, flaring up previous to extinction. Fred has sported this season a new cab and a new pilentum ; by which I infer, that, not being able to book up with his coachmaker, he was forced to employ him. As to his dandyism, Louisa swears that he imported a *blanchisseuse en fin* expressly to get him up. By the way, I can't make the London fellows believe that no one here would shew himself in one of those flourishing flytraps of muslin and embroidery, which *they* prefer to a decent shirt !"

"The London *incroyables* are wearing collars to their coats that resemble an improved species of pillory," cried Lady Louisa, "and as much frippery in the way of *bijouterie* and *lingerie* as a

French actress. Nothing can be more unmanly than the prevailing costume."

"Or more un-French!" added Greville. "All that London copies from Paris, is effected through the intervention of the Journal des Modes, or of speculating shopkeepers, who put off upon the uninstructed, as Parisian, every vulgarity that the Parisians have cast aside. The men here are as studiously plain in their dress and equipage, as the men in London ten years ago. For once, the exchange has been in their favour."

"*Nous voilà !*" cried St. George, as they reached a plain *remise*, waiting at the extremity of the asphaltic pavement; in which having deposited Lady Louisa, he proposed to Greville to prolong their saunter along the Boulevards.

"Lou. won't be sorry to get rid of me while she makes her preparations for to-night," said he. "Supposing we dine together at the club, and join her in the evening?"

Greville had no better engagement to plead,

perhaps no wish to plead one. It was something to get rid of himself and his reflections by so complete a transition, as from the tranquillity of the Faubourg *coterie*, to the rattle of a London man.

CHAPTER IX.

C'est surtout dans le domaine de l'imagination, que la puissance de l'inconnu est incommensurable.

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

THE influence attributed to the power of mystery by that great authority whom it is no longer profane to quote,—the man of genius of to-day, who, twenty years ago, was only a successful mountebank, — is nowhere more curiously exemplified than in the *bal de l'opéra*,—a mob of three thousand disreputable people, into which a couple of hundred decent persons rashly ad-

venture, attracted by the “*puissance incommensurable de l'inconnu !*”

So important, indeed, is the affluence of foreigners annually collected by the far-famed and ill-famed national diversion, that the good city of Paris, howbeit powerfully convinced of its evil influence upon public morals, lacks virtue to decree the suppression of a source of such unquestionable cumulation to its strong boxes. The dissolute scenes which disgraced the days of the regent Duke of Orleans are accordingly revived at the opera, under the decent dynasty of his great-grandson.

Of masquerades, as originally imagined, the charm probably consisted in the assumption of a part as remote as possible from the position of the masquer, and the skill with which the assumption was maintained. At the *bal de l'opéra* the men retain their ordinary dress and deportment ; while the women assume a costume, the merit of which, in each, consists of being undistinguishable from the whole. A few of the

less reputable frequenters of the balls, figure in tawdry fancy dresses; but the mass, which constitutes its attraction, is composed of females in black dominos, with close black hoods covering a close black mask, leaving not a vestige of face or figure to be guessed at, and imparting a mysterious sameness to the assemblage. Hence, the piquant blunders of the scene;—hence, the facility of addressing reproaches or pleasantries to persons whose ear is elsewhere unapproachable. The difficulty of distinguishing and detecting even the most familiar form when arrayed with the real intention of remaining undiscovered, is a thing which only experience renders credible.

Lady Louisa Clare, whose object in visiting a masked ball was the gratification of feminine curiosity, prepared for the hazardous expedition with the highest glee. As Greville and her brother followed her to the carriage, they could scarcely resist a smile at the absurd transformation of one of the prettiest women in London into a frightful familiar of the Inquisition; and even her own high spirits were almost daunted

when she surveyed her new self in the glass. Having purposely delayed their departure till long after midnight, the avenues of the theatre were unencumbered on their tardy arrival; and they passed on, as if for one of the usual representations of the opera.

“ Better not attempt the *foyer* ! ”—whispered Greville, between whom and Lord St. George the adventurous lady was closely escorted.

“ Oh, yes, pray let us see all ! ” cried Lady Louisa. And, a moment afterwards, they were involved in a stream of people, with whom no possible contingency but the *mêlée* of a *bal masqué* could have brought a gentlewoman into contact. For a moment, Lady Louisa was diverted by the oddity of the scene, — the discrepancy of natural voices, issuing from a disguise so unnatural; or the still more curious effect of assumed voices, bewildering, with the most familiar questions, persons wholly unfamiliar with the identity of the questioner. But, in another minute, the press of the coarse unmanly throng by which she was elbowed, grew

insupportable, and the effluvia of so hateful a crowd overpowering. Even under her mask, she blushed to find herself insolently examined by the audacious eyes of libertines. She felt ashamed of herself,—she saw that she was completely out of place.

“For Heaven’s sake get me away !” said she, whispering to her companions.

“Impossible ! You must proceed with the stream, and we will push our way out at the next turn,” replied her brother, greatly annoyed. But these few words, by pointing them out as English, drew down upon Lady Louisa a shower of the familiar pleasantries peculiar to the spot ; which to resent, is to augment a thousand fold the evil.

It was not without difficulty, or being terrified almost to tears, that Lady Louisa found herself at length enabled to breathe, in an upper box to which she was anxiously removed by her cavaliers.

“Another time you will believe me, Lou !”

said Lord St. George. “ This is no place for a lady,—no place at least for an Englishwoman. *You* have no debts of vengeance to pay off, like most of those you see chattering so busily around us ; nothing, in short, to excuse the freedoms of the scene, or invest it with interest. But, look down.—The galoppe is beginning !”

A glance at the wild train of gallopers, shouting their frenzied way round the vast area of the theatre, which, in spite of the innumerable lustres and lights gleaming in every direction, could scarcely be descried through the misty atmosphere produced by intermingling dust and heat, sufficed to complete the consternation of Lady Louisa. To retreat was, however, impossible. The carriage was gone, the lobbies were encumbered. There was no alternative but to remain quiet and repentant in her box.

“ I can only excuse myself,” said she to Lord Greville, “ for having neglected your good advice, by assuring you that the Dronelys, the Carmichaels, and a hundred others equally prudish

and decorous, acknowledged to me their having visited the *bal masqué* !”

“Just as you have visited it yourself,” replied Greville,—“by mistake !”—

“Led by the fatal curiosity, bequeathed by mother Eve to her granddaughters,” cried Lord St. George.—

“And mischievously stimulated by her grandsons,”—added his sister. “Should I have persisted, think you, in coming here to-night in spite of Lord Greville’s sage prognostications, but for overhearing all you were saying on the subject last night at the Embassy to Madame de St. Pierre ?”—

“I certainly tried to persuade the pretty Duchess to make a party,” said he, “because it is a portion of the vocation of lionism to glide, once in the season, unperceived, into the *bal de l’opéra*. Such adventures are congenial to a Frenchwoman. She knows how to get both in and out of them, without getting either into a fright or a scrape.—Mind, I don’t reproach you,

Lou, with your alarm just now !—I should have been sorry to find you a jot less terrified ; but the decency of an Englishwoman's nature is precisely what disqualifies her for running the gauntlet of a *bal masqué* !”

“ Yet I am almost certain that my quiet friend Madame de Clermont, on the arm of the Duke, passed me just now in the *couloir* !”

“ Exactly,—coming out of her own box on the arm of her own husband ;—and, even then, *masquée aux dents*. It is her first essay, I suspect, and will be her last, I am sure. By the way, Grev, have you any knowledge of that piquante little mask we met on the stairs, who insisted upon calling Louisa ‘ Mademoiselle,’ and seemed to be killing you *à coup d’épingles* by her impertinences ?”—

“ Some person of society, I conclude, from her being on the arm of Ferdinand de Valsan,” replied Greville.

“ The *élégant*, with white teeth and black hair, whom you presented to me last night at the

Embassy?"—inquired Lady Louisa of her brother. "If you allude to the little woman in a black satin domino trimmed with lace, on *his* arm, I heard one of the party belonging to the Prince de Chaulieu address her as *ma chère Comtesse*—"

"Chaulieu's party was composed of Madame de St. Pierre, Madame Jules de la Roche Aymar, and half-a-dozen other *lionnes* of the first water," observed Lord St. George. "By the way, Grev, I saw them immensely amused by the *taquineries* with which that saucy little mask was favouring *you*. Chaulieu grew quite fierce upon the matter, and remonstrated with Val-san."

Lord Greville was not surprised; for the saucy little mask was no other than Madame de Kersakoff,—and the object of her unsparing *persiflage* Mademoiselle de Nangis,—for whom she mistook, or pretended to mistake, Lady Louisa Clare!—

"I scarcely listened to her attack," observed Greville, colouring. "People of that kind

come here by way of an excuse for a supper afterwards, at the Café de Paris ; where they boast to each other of the mischief they have made, and the sensation they have created. Unluckily, the report of their sayings and doings is sure to produce mischief by encouraging others to the same rash exploits, besides depreciating those already involved in so foolish a frolic.”

“ I hope you are not threatening *me* with the loss of my fair fame for having hazarded so foolish a frolic ?”—demanded Lady Louisa Clare.

“ No, no ;—*you* are safe ! Neither St. George nor myself are of sufficient consequence to prove injurious. It is the attendance of the *lion* that betrays the masked *lionne*. *Les jeunes gens à la mode*, such as Chaulieu,—Cerny,—Valsan,—are fond of doing the honours of Paris to the pretty foreigners who, while going the round of its national institutions, usually visit the bal masqué. Among *them* occur those piquant adventures, that make the reputation of the *bal de*

l'opéra!—But out of the thousands on whose dingy heads you are now looking down with interest, because of their mysterious costume, there are probably not thirty from whom you would not turn with disgust or indifference, did they appear out of mask. The *puissance de l'inconnu* is all in all.”

“Another time, I will take its power upon hearsay,” observed Lady Louisa, almost gasping for breath; and soon afterwards, the heat, increased by the oppression of her mask, being insupportable, she proposed braving the throng, and returning home with her brother, *en fiacre*.

While hurrying eagerly through the throng, intent only upon escaping unnoticed, poor Greville found himself accosted by name by the brazen voice of the bold cuirassier.

“*Ah ! ça—mon cher Grévil !*”—cried he; and though Greville passed on without answering, the name thus rashly rendered public by his vulgar familiarity, was immediately caught up by the masked mob, and “Milor Grévil,—milor

Dévil,—milédi Dévil !” accompanied by peals of laughter, followed the party as long as they remained in sight.

Unluckily, Colonel d’Aramon saw fit to follow them also. To *him*, “milor Grévil” was an object of peculiar interest. The fifteen last refusals he had indignantly undergone at the hands of his cousin Eugénie, whose fine fortune would have made so agreeable an appanage to the Château de Grangeneuve, were attributed to the influence of the handsome Englishman ; and he was consequently not a little desirous to discover his rival engaged in some *bal masqué* adventure, affording hopes that he had adverse attachments. D’Aramon would have been content with the hope of being accepted as a *pis aller*, provided the elegant little woman *si bien chaussée si bien gantée* to whom Greville was devoting his attentions, should prove the means of discountenancing the foolish but faithful preference of Eugénie de Nangis.

As Greville was hurrying back through

the vestibule, accordingly, after assisting Lady Louisa to her carriage, he suddenly found himself in the hug of the bear.

“It is clearer now in the *foyer*, *mon cher* !” cried d’Aramon, attaching himself to his side. “Your charming little Russian has frightened herself away too soon.—You should have persuaded her to take another peep at the *foyer*, if only for the sake of seeing that conceited ape, Ramuroff, stationed under the clock to await a rendezvous,—a ‘remember twelve,’ sent to him at the club in a feigned hand, by Frédéric de St. Pierre.”

“The *foyer* is too hot to hold one,” replied Greville, trying to escape.

“Too hot for the pretty Lithuanian Countess, you mean—”

“I have not the honour of understanding you,” replied Greville, anxious to shake him off before he went in search of the party headed by Chaulieu and Cerny. But Colonel d’Aramon stuck fast, shouldering his way, square and un-

yielding, through the crowd, as though the pedestal of the statue on the Pont Neuf had taken to its travels ; even when Greville found himself attacked a second time by the little mask in the black satin domino, who, in the interim, had quitted the arm of Ferdinand de Valsan for that of one of the Russian attachés.

“ Leave him alone, poor fellow ;—do not endanger his fidelity ! ”—cried d’Aramon, affecting to defend his friend from her bold persiflage. “ It is not five minutes since he put his Russian Countess into her carriage.—*N’est ce pas, mon cher Grévil ?* ”—

“ *La petite Comtesse Russe ?* ”—repeated Madame de Kersakoff, almost startled out of her masquerade voice.

“ *Comtesse,—Princesse—que sais je !*—All I know is, that he is a very happy man,” replied the *malencontreux*, indulging in one of those broad laughs which harass more than words the ear of a sensitive man.

“ Your friend seems singularly in your confi-

dence, *mon beau Milor !*”—cried Madame de Kersakoff, trembling with rage. “Pray have you been passing off one of your Faubourg belles upon him for a *Comtesse Russe*?—The Rue St. Dominique has every reason to be grateful to so discreet a cavalier !”

Lord Greville, irritated to find that, in addition to d’Aramon, the Chaulieu party were within hearing, rashly hazarded a retort, that brought upon him only a more distinct allusion to his intimacy with Madame de Rostanges and her sister.

“Let us leave this spiteful little mask to herself,” said he, attempting to disentangle himself from the circle; “she has clearly missed her *infidèle berger*, and is revenging herself on persons of whom she knows nothing.”

D’Aramon, however, chose to adhere to the mysterious little personage, so conversant with the secrets of his rival; extracting a thousand malicious hints from her random accusations.

As the crowd diminished, Greville perceived, with surprise, that the mass, which he had condemned as composed exclusively of "mob," contained, in straggling groups, most of the fashionable young men of Paris ; more especially the foreigners, diplomatic or millionaire, who were wandering about in search of adventures which disgusted them when found,—in impatient anticipation of the iced Aij or Sillery awaiting them at the Café de Paris, to cleanse their bosoms of the perilous stuff called *ennui*, and their mouths of the clouds of dust they had been angrily imbibing.

In proportion as the crowd disappeared, however, the tumult seemed to increase. The postillons de Longjumeau grew uproarious with much punch ; till even the deafening clang of the vast orchestra was overpowered by the shouts of the dancers.—Greville shrugged his shoulders in disgust, as he struggled his way into the Rue Lepelletier ; which, a heavy fall of

snow having covered the ground in the interval, afforded a singular contrast to the glare and reeking vapours of the pandemonium within.

Two deep vexations pursued him towards his home in the Faubourg:—that he should have been the means of introducing an English gentlewoman into a scene so polluted; and that d'Aramon should have been an auditor of the impertinent allusions of the jealous little lady in the black satin domino. He retired to rest, thoroughly in disgust with himself. Though the expedition to the *bal masqué* was far from being of his own devising, it seemed like an act of treachery towards the predominating influence of his heart.

In due course after the headache arising from the heat and noise of such a throng, came the heart-ache, the moral indigestion, with which he awoke on the morrow.—A *bal masqué* which has created no illusions, is sure to create a nausea.—While the bray of the orchestra was still clanging in his ears,—the clammy air of

the fetid atmosphere still clinging to his hair,—he felt thoroughly ashamed of himself. Nor was his remorse of conscience lessened, when the foreign post made its appearance, and brought no letters from England,—no reply to his earnest appeal to his mother!—

From the number of days that had now elapsed, it was clear Lady Greville disdained to accord an answer.—His letter was one of those which call forth an instant reply, or are passed over without notice. The Countess evidently considered that a negative was sufficiently implied in utter silence.

But how, with this dispiriting conviction, *how* was he to return to the Hotel de Rostanges?—how trust himself again and again in the society of one who was regaining all her former power over his affections?—Was it just to Eugénie to allow the confession of his attachment to escape his every look, his every gesture, when he knew that more candid and more manly avowals were solemnly interdicted?—

“At least this one more visit!”—was the pretext by which he sanctioned to himself the inconsistency of his conduct.—“After my incoherent farewell yesterday, it is incumbent on me to see her again, ere I take my final leave of Paris.”—

Yet his courage almost failed as he re-approached the Rue St. Dominique, and reflected upon the bitter allusions hazarded by the malicious Madame de Kersakoff the preceding night. He was conscious of an injury towards Mademoiselle de Nangis as well as to himself.

Once across the threshold, however, the charm of the spot prevailed over his scruples; and he was about to enter the Marquis's room with his usual cheerful countenance, when the uplifted finger of Sophie, who sat watching beside the invalid as he lay asleep on the sofa, warned him to forbear. Rising cautiously from her chair, she glided forth to receive the visit of Lord Greville in an adjoining chamber.

“He is better, thank God—much better !” she replied, in answer to his eager inquiries after the invalid ; “free from pain, and enjoying a quiet slumber. It is not of him I want to talk to you, dear Lord Greville ;—it is of yourself,—it is of Eugénie.—If, therefore, your conscience cries ‘guilty,’ *sauvez vous* before I open my case !”—

“My conscience cries ‘not guilty !’”—replied the Earl, with solemn earnestness. “Would—would that every feeling and sentiment of my heart could be laid bare to you, and your verdict would confirm my plea.”

“Since you defend yourself so strenuously, you must not resent my observing that your conduct towards Eugénie has attracted the attention of our circles ;” observed Madame de Rostanges, gravely. “Your attentions at the ball of the Duchess of Orleans, called forth general notice. You are in a position not to be overlooked ; and have no right (permit me to tell you so) to particularize a person whom you have already exposed to sorrow and blame, so

as to render her a mark for the censorious. The coldness of your mutual deportment at your first interviews, persuaded me I might invite you here again without danger for my sister:—nay, had it been otherwise, I could scarcely have ventured to oppose the predilections of my poor dying husband. But I appeal to your good sense,—I appeal to your good feeling,—I appeal to the regard you have uniformly professed for me and mine,—do not compel me to thwart the wishes of poor Adolphe, by precautions for my sister's welfare. Your influence over her affections——”

“ My influence !” — mournfully reiterated Greville.

“ Yes—*yours* !—All that I wrote to you long ago, I now confirm.—Your influence prompted her to render impossible a marriage with St. Sévron, which would have secured her happiness and prosperity,—by proposing his union with her friend.”—

“ The match, then, was of her making ?”—

cried Lord Greville, eagerly. — “ Poor St. Sévron ! ” —

“ Do not pity him,—he has gained an affectionate wife and lost a repining one,”—cried the Marchioness. “ Reserve your compassion for my sister, who has lost a brilliant position and inestimable companion, for the liberty of cherishing a chimera.—Heaven knows I have little occasion to canvass for suitors for her ; and as regards worldly prospects, I had rather see her wedded with a man of her own country and religion, than with any foreigner, however distinguished in rank and fortune, by whom she must be alienated from her native land.—So convinced, however, am I of the indelible nature of her sentiments, that even as I once tendered you her hand,—I offer it again ; — and if again you answer me by hesitating silence, I exercise my rights as her sole remaining relative, to say—that you must refrain from attentions compromising her happiness and honour.”

“ You are right ! ”—cried Greville ; in whose

memory the taunts of Madame de Kersakoff were still rankling. “I *have* no claim to monopolise her attention by demonstrations of an attachment foredoomed to end in misery !—Till now, I trusted that circumstances would enable me to explain the fatal cause of this condemnation.—Even *this* palliation is denied me !—All I dare avow, either to her or you, is that I love her with the most devoted, the most passionate attachment; yet that, for both our sakes, it is better we should meet no more !”—

Greville was still standing, as he uttered these hasty explanations. He now approached the Marchioness, and, with an agitated gesture, extended his hand towards her. Conceiving that a token of peace was all he sought, her own could scarcely be withheld.

Another moment, however, and she found she had accepted a pledge of farewell !—Another moment, and Lord Greville had hurried from the chamber,—had quitted the house.—

A terrible presentiment seemed to forewarn

her that she had seen him for the last time ;— that her rashness had been fatal to the prospects of her sister. Till that moment, she had been imperfectly aware of the firmness of her reliance upon him,—till that moment she had scarcely appreciated his power over the happiness of her family. How could she answer for it to her husband, to Eugénie, if her interference should prove the means of banishing Lord Greville a second time from their society !—

The voice of the invalid, summoning her from the adjoining chamber, put a hasty close to her conjectures ; and she was forced to repress her rising tears, and assume a cheerful countenance, as she entered the presence of him over whom the sight of her affliction might exercise a fatal influence.

“ Where is Greville ?—I fancied I heard the voice of Greville ? ”—faltered the Marquis, on perceiving that she approached him unaccompanied.

“ I am quite alone,” she replied. “ But St.

Sévron will be here soon, and my sister,—would you like me to summon Eugénie?”—

“No; I want *Greville*!—There is something in Greville’s conversation that soothes me, like a reminiscence of youth! You can scarcely imagine, dearest Sophie, how I pined after that lad during his absence,—you can scarcely imagine the pleasure with which I hailed his return!—How are we to account for such predilections?—that they are sympathies vouchsafed to cheer the dreariness of life, like the wild-flowers springing in the fields to diversify their monotony?”—

“Those who have a cultivated garden at their disposal, care little for field-flowers,” observed Sophie. “You have so many kindred hearts around you,—so many early friends—”

“Nevertheless, I cannot dispense with Greville!” persisted the old man, smiling at her grave remonstrance. “There is a melodious tenderness in his very intonation which,—but I am growing a woman, to dwell upon such

trifles! Just now, I was dreaming a happy dream,—one of those disjointed visions that irradiate the darkness of a sick chamber. I seemed to be in some blessed region,—Elysian fields, — paradise, — no matter! — some spot that admitted neither the sense of pain nor dread of sorrow. Contrast such an existence with the anguish of physical suffering and the terrors of death; and reflect what it must have been to wake from such entrancement!— Yet will you believe it, dearest?—I was reconciled to the change because I fancied that *he* was one of the speakers whose voice had startled me from my doze,—content to resign my illusions for the reality of welcoming Greville!”—

Madame de Rostanges almost writhed as she listened!—Still deeper was her despair, when, as the day passed heavily on, the inquiries of the invalid after the truant became almost peevish with vexation.

“He promised to come!—This is the first time

he ever broke a promise to me!" faltered the poor Marquis, who was reduced to the irritability of an ailing child.

"Since he promised to come, be sure that he will not forfeit his word!"—rejoined Mademoiselle de Nangis, who had resumed her attendance on her brother-in-law. But as the hours wore away, even Eugénie grew anxious. Her pale cheeks became gradually flushed with a tinge, how different in its origin from the happy blushes mantling there the preceding day!—

The winter-day closed in, — lights were brought,—the curtains drawn.—"People talk of the days lengthening," moaned the captious invalid;—"to me, they seem to grow shorter and shorter!—Greville must have had some pressing engagement, or he would not have disappointed us.—I see he will not come to-day."—

"*Pardon, Monsieur le Marquis!*—Milor came while you were asleep,—Milor had a long interview with Madame la Marquise in the *salle à manger*," observed Baptiste, who happened to be

occupied in arranging the *tisanne de violette* of his master.

An involuntary glance of surprise passed between the invalid and his sister-in-law. Each discerned the unavowed anxiety of the other.

“ True, true,—I had forgotten. You should have reminded me, dear Sophie, that I had missed his visit,” faltered the agitated Marquis, turning to address his wife, eager to disguise from his attendant his utter discomposure.

But previous to Baptiste’s communication, Madame de Rostanges had abruptly quitted the room !—

CHAPTER X.

Il est des colères saintes où la terre tremblerait si elle sentait ce qui se passe dans un grand cœur outragé.

GEORGE SAND.

DRIZZLING snow was falling as Greville quitted the Hotel de Rostanges ; and though his excitement of mind was thrice as irritating as when, the preceding day, he rushed towards the Champs Elysées, he now made his way doggedly home,—to his own silent chamber,—to enjoy unmolested the survey of prospects as cheerless as the weather.

That Sophie had acted wisely, he could not dispute. She had only exacted that which his

conscience suggested as a duty ; and it was consequently to his own weakness and inconsistency he attributed his bitter sense of mortification and disappointment.

He could almost number his occasions of enjoying the society of Eugénie since he had acquired the certainty of her being free.—He could recall to mind, word by word, and look by look, all that had passed between them in those interviews. That “all” amounted to nothing, had it been recounted to others as an evidence of mutual attachment. Yet what worlds of tenderness and hope were comprehended in its broken words, its averted glances, its half subdued impulses,—defying all control of reason, all compliance with the ceremonies of outward form.

In their mere act of standing together, looking on while others danced or listening while others talked, the confidence of friendship had been demonstrated in their silence,—the confidence of mutual affection, in their tranquillity. There might seem little to resign in this mutual understanding, this simple charm of being together. But for Greville, it comprehended all

he was permitted to hope of the thrilling joys of mutual affection. — For Greville, it was the well-spring in the desert; and from this, even this last assuagement of the weariness of his pilgrimage, he was banished for ever! —

Though disposed to submit to the decree of Madame de Rostanges, he found it difficult to comprehend the sudden prudence dictating her change of conduct. What if the scandalous allusions to Madame de Kersakoff the preceding night, had already reached her ear? — What if some talebearer, — d'Aramon, — it could be no other than d'Aramon, — had borne to the Hotel de Rostanges a rumour that the name of the high-minded Eugénie de Nangis had been introduced into the coarse pleasantries of a *bal masqué*? — As the idea presented itself to him, a deep flush rushed to the cheek of Greville, and an imprecation escaped his lips. He could figure to himself the chaste indignation portrayed in that noble countenance, severe in youthful beauty as the Venus of Milo; — he could imagine the scorn with which both sisters must regard him for having suffered such im-

putations to be uttered in his presence. But what was it compared with his own bitter contempt of the traitor, who probably grounded hopes of personal success on his ungenerous revelations !—

The more he reflected on the expressions of Madame de Rostanges, the more he became assured of Colonel d'Aramon's intervention. Greville would have given worlds to find himself at that moment face to face with the offender. But he knew not where to seek him. He had afforded too little encouragement to his advances, to be honoured by a visit; and further inquiries of Valsan were indispensable to justify the satisfaction he was resolved to demand, should he obtain the smallest pretext for an explanation with the Colonel.

Amid all his rage, however, and all his regrets, he was forced to tame down the irritation of his mind to the miserable routine of conventional form. Dark as was the tenour of his thoughts, and dreary the aspect of the weather, he was compelled to repair to a dinner engagement, too formal to admit of disregard; having accepted,

ten days before, an invitation to a *dîner prié* at the *Ministère de l'Intérieur*.

He had already despatched his passport to secure post-horses immediately after the foreign post hour on the following morning; and was undergoing the usual annoyance of questions and suggestions preparatory to a journey, from which even the best regulated *laquais de place* cannot wholly exempt his master on the eve of departure. He resigned himself, therefore, with less regret to his dinner-party. Of two nuisances, it was less tiresome to undergo a state banquet at the hands of Monsieur Clermont de Thorigny, than complaints of tardy laundresses and extortionate tailors from the lips of François.

A formal dinner implies pretty much the same ceremony in all the capitals of Europe; saving, perhaps, that London has more pepper in its sauces, and less punctuality in its guests. In Paris, a *dîner de cérémonie* is attended with much form, but without fuss. The service of the table is better performed than elsewhere, unless in a few first-rate English houses. A ministerial dinner, more especially, being usually

an affair of contract, is invariably well organized; deficient only in the wines,—“*les hommes de Juillet*” not having yet attained the stability essential to the permanence of a ministry, or a cellar.

It was to his friendship with the Valsans, that Greville was indebted for the distinction of being a guest at a ministerial table; an honour rarely accorded in France to young Englishmen, however high their social position. Though Greville had long ceased to feel an alien in the land, he was not sorry to find himself seated at the vast and gorgeous dinner-table, next to a countryman,—one whose conciliating manners and unpretending intelligence have won for him the golden title of “agreeable,” in a capital where agreeability passes for a fifth virtue, superseding the antediluvian four. With us, the epithet and the faculty are too little in request to dispose us to compute the multitude of qualifications indispensable to the composition of this minor morality;—to wit, superiority of intellect, temper, tact,—the control of all selfishness, and the ab-

sence of all pretension. For to be thoroughly agreeable, a man must be witty, wise, well-bred, good-tempered, — all that constitutes a great man, yet affords no superfluous merit to a private gentleman.

Lord Greville found *his* companion eminently pleasant; for he talked politics like a man of the world, and of the world like a politician; keen and shrewd, but tempering his wit with the *bonhommie* of a modern Epicurean, averse to inflict as to endure vexation. It was not, however, allowed him to converse much with one upon whom the politicians present were exercising their forcing-pumps; and he was consequently at liberty to interrogate Valsan concerning their adventure of the preceding night.

“I could no more prevent the little Countess from revenging herself on your ingratitude, *mon cher*, than prevent your making a display of your infidelities!” replied Ferdinand, treating the thing as a jest. “At the *bal masqué*, you know, everything is permissible; and those who have sins unwhipt of justice must not go there to expose them to flagellation. Ever beware of

the legion of furies concentrated in the tongue of a jealous woman !”—

“ You do me too much honour as regards my influence over the lady in question,” replied Greville, not choosing to hazard the mention of Madame de Kersakoff’s name, which might chance to be overheard, even amid the loud political disputations going on around them; in which the quiet wit of Henry B—— and Monsieur ——, shone like the sparks emitted by a steam train in a tunnel, the brighter for the astounding noise and surrounding darkness. “ But I still think you should have induced her to avoid allusions which compromised persons she had no right to associate with such degradations.”

“ My dear fellow, the law of the *bal masqué* is as absolute in France as any article of the Code Napoleon !” cried Valsan. “ *There*, everybody has a right to talk *of* everybody, and *to* anybody, unless a lady under the sacred protection of a domino who does not challenge conversation. Above all, *I* am not to blame !—It was that *bœuf gras à favoris et à moustaches*, who looked like a *tambour major en retraite*, that

provoked her to attack you. Nay, after you were gone, he remained with us, inciting her to say a thousand things concerning you and others, which the angry little darling coloured, I admit, somewhat too highly."

It was lucky, perhaps, for d'Aramon that the word which Greville was at that moment tempted to couple with his own, was audible only to the *maitre d'hôtel*, who was offering him *madère sec* after his *fondue Russe*. But when, immediately after dessert, and the café succeeding dessert too closely to leave occasion for the horrible formalities of a removal to the drawing-room, Ferdinand de Valsan proposed to him that they should repair together to the Sunday evening receptions of the Sardinian and Austrian Ambassadors, it was chiefly in the hope of meeting the Châtelain of Grangeneuve for a word of explanation, that Lord Greville did violence to his desire to return home for the cultivation of his distempered feelings.

That he quitted the ministerial dinner-table without noticing a single particular of the entertainment, is a proof that all was ordered with the usual exactness of arrangement; for

defect is far more apt to force itself upon people's notice than perfection.

“ Let us do our duty first *chez* Madame de B——. Business before pleasure !”—cried Valsan. And they accordingly entered the unpretending circle of an Ambassador who has more the aspect of *un homme d'Etat*, and an Ambassadors who has more the deportment of a kindly Englishwoman, than is usually the case among Italians of ancient name.

“ This is not the first time I have reproached myself,” observed Greville to Ferdinand de Valsan, as they stood surveying a circle somewhat too simple in its habits to accord with the false taste engendered by the brilliancies of the carnival,—“ with having neglected to cultivate the society of the Italians here. I like their manners,—I like their absence of pretension.—We have a vulgar prejudice in England (where Italians are chiefly thought of as singers and lazzaroni,) that their manners are all gesticulation, and their minds all deceit. The Italians with whom I am acquainted are remarkable, on the contrary, for the serenity of their deportment and the candour of their nature.

Easy and unaffected, they are pleasant companions, as much from the vivacity of their impressions as from the calmness with which those vivid impressions are expressed."

"They are less exaggerated in their raptures, perhaps, than my *concitoyens*," replied Valsan, laughing. "The emphasis with which we French enlarge upon our enjoyments, proves nothing but our want of sensibility. But while praising the Italians, talk to me of their beauty! Talk to me of the gifted Princess yonder, who looks like a picture, by Titian, of one of those *doctissima* idols of the middle ages, at whose feet Cardinals and professors sat and worshipped."

"Or her bright little sunbeam of a sister," added Greville, "in whom perfect *naïveté* is combined with brilliant *finesse*,—like one of Comte Hamilton's fairy tales concentrated in the nature of a lovely girl!"

"*Allons donc!*—we shall have Madame de Kersakoff wreaking all the malice she can spare from Mademoiselle de Nangis upon *la charmante Valentine!*" cried Valsan, dragging him away from the party; and a few minutes afterwards,

they were paying their compliments in another diplomatic circle,—a circle wherein the sterling worth of the German character has been refined by long residence in the centre of Parisian civilization.

“ Here, you will find yourself in a full congregation of your country-people !” cried Valsan. “ Hundreds of English, who are barely endured at your Embassy, inflict themselves like a penal statute on Madame A—— !”

“ Just as hundreds of French, who would not be received at your father’s or brother-in-law’s, inflict themselves like a penal statute on our Ambassador,” replied Greville, drily, — “ knowing that it is her cue to be tolerant with the French, just as it is the cue of the foreign diplomacy to be tolerant of the English. We are safe to-night, however. Our rigid Protestantism is a glorious safeguard for the Sunday *soirées*. Among the crowd, you perceive, there are not twenty English people, and those Catholics.”

“ Is your friend Lord St. George a Catholic ?” inquired Valsan, carelessly.

“ He is a man of fashion,” replied Greville, unwilling to answer for the creed of his friend,

who was just then in the act of being presented to Countess Kersakoff by one of the handsome sons of the Ambassadors; and Greville entertained little doubt that her object in making the acquaintance, was to ascertain the name of his fair companion the preceding night at the *bal masqué*. Ferdinand de Valsan, however, was evidently piqued at the graciousness of her manner towards the English dandy.

“It always strikes me,” said Greville, as they listened, amid the brilliant assembly, to the announcement of a succession of the historical names of France, “that the *salon* here exhibits almost exclusively the old France, which in France is obsolete, existing rather in Rome and Vienna than in your own circles. The same tone of society perhaps may be found in one or two Carlist houses; but so depressed, so stultified by the circumstances of the party, that it rather resembles Versailles in family mourning, than a correct representation of those charming coteries we find described in your memoirs of the last century.”

“And which, like the leaning tower of Pisa, excite one’s admiration more than anything so

crooked should have stood so long, than from inherent merit," added Valsan, too much a graft of *la jeune France* to accord merit to the *ancien régime*. "I agree with you, however, that this house is one of the pleasantest in Paris; but rather from the absence of all *tracasserie*,—rather because the mistress is amiable, and *les jeunes gens aimables*,—than because it reminds me of things that are better forgotten. But here comes your friend, the *bœuf gras à moustaches*!"

Habituated to the undauntable familiarity of Colonel d'Aramon, Greville had been anticipating the difficulty of giving, without a violation of good breeding, a sufficiently cool reception to his advances to intimate a declaration of civil war. It is no easy matter to be formal with a man who slaps you on the back, or to be distant with one who accosts you as *mon cher*, with a countenance as open as that of *Lepeintre jeune*, and as brazen as that of Lafott; and Greville feared that nothing short of a direct offence would convince a man *cuirassé* in mind as well as body, that he was insulted.

But, to his surprise, his distant bow to Colonel d'Aramon was acknowledged by a salutation so profound, as to render it worse than no salutation at all. With his blood flowing the wrong way in his veins, Greville was scarcely able to repress his indignation !—

To resent the conduct of d'Aramon in a spot where any deviation from the even tenour of social order must have been offensively apparent, was impossible; but as soon as Greville could obtain a quiet hearing of Lord St. George, he explained his position, and requested him to enter into explanations with Colonel d'Aramon as they quitted the house.

“What the deuce are you at, my dear Greville?”—replied St. George, after a deliberate pinch of snuff, rejoicing that his friend had confided the matter to him, rather than to one of his fire-eating acquaintances of the Jockey Club, who would have been sure to foment the affair into a scene on the spot, and a duel on the morrow.—“You surely don't mean to compromise yourself by getting up a quarrel with a man whom nobody even heard of?—Had it

been Noailles, indeed, or Chalais, or Perigood, or——”

“I could only have brought it to the same issue!—Colonel d’Aramon is a man of good connexions, possessing a fine property in Burgundy”——

“Bah!—a colonel of cuirassiers, and a provincial!—the vocation of the latter being to commit blunders, and of the former to avenge them. The fellow looks big, because he can’t help it. If he bowed to you somewhat stiffly, the best thing you can do is to thank your stars for having lost a vulgar acquaintance.”——

“My dear fellow, you don’t see your way through the business,” remonstrated Lord Greville. “That chattering little mask last night insulted a relation of d’Aramon in her attacks upon *me*; and I am convinced that he both resents it and wishes to turn it to account.”

“*Les suites d’un bal masqué!*—Why, this is a more exquisite song than the other. Think of figuring in a paragraph of the *Messenger*, as emulating the students of the *pays Latin*, or *élégants* of the *jardin des plantes*, who betake

themselves to the Bois de Boulogne the day after a ball at the *Chaumière*, to break a lance for the *beaux yeux* of some little *modiste* of the Rue St. Denis !”

“ Since you are determined to treat the matter as a jest——”

“ I would fain induce you to do the same !”——

“ D’Aramon is not a student of the *pays Latin*, nor is his cousin a *grisette*,”——persisted Greville. “ I owe more to both, than to refuse to meet him on equal grounds——”

“ Equal grounds !” repeated St. George,—a vision of the majestic turrets of Greville Abbey recurring involuntarily to his mind’s eye.

“ In short, you are unwilling to interfere in the business !—Seeing which, I will place it in the hands of Valsan, who, having been present last night as well as yourself, is perfectly qualified to negotiate between us.”

“ No, no !—if you *must* tilt at the windmill, pray let me have a hand in the exploit !”——cried St. George, foreseeing all that was likely to arise from the interference of a young Frenchman, instinctively delighting in a fencing bout, as an Irishman in a row.—At the close of the *soirée*,

accordingly, as Colonel d'Aramon, looking ineffably grand, was stalking out of the hall, Lord St. George fulfilled his commission, with an air of hauteur as fatal to all idea of pacification, as the fiery bellicquosity of *la jeune France*. The Colonel himself, however, was most pugnaciously disposed. Having essayed all other means to insinuate himself into the graces and *trente mille francs de rentes* of his cousin Eugénie, he had every disposition to try the effect of a *combat à outrance* with her favourite knight;—and on a demand for explanation on the part of Greville, referred Lord St. George to his friend General d'E——, a name too respectable for even a London dandy to disparage.

“I am going to my club,” added the Colonel. “I believe you are also a member. We shall be sure to find d'E—— at the whist-table.”

For a moment, St. George was startled.—Conceiving it impossible that any man would venture to refer to his club—as a club—unless the Union or the Jockey, he was as much disgusted when he found that d'Aramon alluded to the Agricultural Circle of the Faubourg, as a

Crockfordite might be on finding himself invited into the * * * *!

“One of the *pommes de terres*?—I guessed as much!”—mused St. George, as he took down the address of General d’E——. But at that moment, the cabriolet of Lord Greville unluckily drove up to the *perron* on which they were standing: and as his lordship rushed inconsiderately out of the hall at the announcement, he pushed against the square figure of the Colonel, with a gesture which at any other moment might have passed for accidental.

Both were in a state of excitement; and it was with difficulty that St. George prevented their quarrel from producing a disgraceful brawl. It was only upon his promise to go instantly in search of the General, that they agreed to separate; and Greville repaired to his hotel, to await an intimation of the hostile measures likely to result from a quarrel now become purely personal.

Meanwhile, the evening had been dragging its weary length with unusual tediousness at the Hotel de Rostanges. Against their better reason, Mademoiselle de Nangis and her brother-in-

law were discomfited by the discovery of the secret understanding that seemed to subsist between Sophie and Lord Greville.

The motive of the Marchioness for quitting them so abruptly had been to despatch a few earnest lines, imploring Greville not to quit Paris without having accorded a parting interview to the invalid, to whom his society was so precious ; and on her return to the sick chamber, she unluckily confirmed the uneasy feelings excited by Baptiste's officiousness, by assigning a suppositious motive for her absence. She fancied that any allusion to the name of Greville, must produce further inquiries.

The letter was gone ; and her gentle tenderness of nature suggested the probability that Greville would not find courage to persist in his project of departure, when he saw how vital the necessity of his presence to the dying man.

Unused to dissimulation, however, and fearless, like all innocent persons, of misconstruction, she had neglected to warn the servant entrusted to convey her note to the Rue de Lille, that his mission was confidential. Scarcely, therefore, had she resumed her accustomed post

by the side of her husband, and descended to the unaccustomed sin of equivocation, when Baptiste made his appearance with intelligence that “ Pierre had hastened with the billet of Madame la Marquise to the Hotel Voltaire ; but that *Milor dinait en ville.*”

If anything could increase the surprise with which Eugénie and Rostanges listened to this announcement, it would have been the consciousness and emotion suffusing the cheeks of Sophie.

“ *C'est bien,—c'est bien !*”—stammered she, eager only to check the communicativeness of the poor old man ; who, unconscious of any grounds for mystery, and accustomed to find his prolixities treated with indulgence, chose to enlarge further upon his text.

“ As Madame la Marquise appeared so eager for an answer,” resumed he, “ Pierre very properly inquired of the porter where Milor might happen to be dining, in order that he might follow him with the letter. But François, my lord's *laquais de place*, was unluckily absent ; and the people of the hotel knew nothing about the matter. It was not discretion on the part

of the porter that induced him to affect ignorance ; for he was *assez mal appris* to inform Pierre that my lord had not returned home from the *bal de l'opéra* till six o'clock this morning."

" *C'est bien, c'est bien !*"—again exclaimed Madame de Rostanges, displeased for the first time by a garrulity that she had often encouraged on the part of the favourite old servant, for the entertainment of the invalid.

But the mischief was done. When the old maître d'hôtel quitted the room, the sting of his intelligence remained. Among persons living in habits of unlimited confidence, the discovery of even a trivial act of concealment appears a crime. That Sophie should have concealed from her husband the visit of Lord Greville, or be engaged in a clandestine correspondence with him, was a thing to excite a thousand vague apprehensions. Dissimulation without guilt, seemed impossible ; and as it was equally impossible to attribute a fault to one whose every thought was purity, Eugénie rightly conjectured that her sister's reserve foreboded evil to come. A damp consequently depressed the spirits of the little circle, which effectually counterba-

lanced the improvement noticed that morning in the state of the sufferer.

The Marquis, indeed, flattered himself that his discomposure was imperceptible. Ashamed of his uneasiness, he was eager that the being on whom he so tenderly relied should be exonerated from a shadow of blame, for her sake as much as for his own. Yet the dread of inflicting even a momentary pang, determined him to abstain from interrogation. He would wait her own time for being explicit; and his farewell for the night, as he was wheeled off into his own apartment, was uttered, as far as possible, in his usual tone.

Even after his departure, however, the presence of Mademoiselle de Nangis was almost as great a restraint to the Marchioness as that of her husband. Every moment, she was in hope and fear that Greville might unexpectedly return home, despatch an answer to her letter, and produce an explanation distressing to the feelings of Eugénie. Vainly did Sophie attempt to persuade her to accompany Madame de St. Sévron to the *soirée* of the Ambassadress. Mademoiselle de Nangis declared herself to be

too weary for the effort of dressing on so cheerless a night ; till at length, the often-repeated arguments of Madame de Rostanges drove her to the quiet refuge of her private apartments.

The mysteries of that eventful evening, however, were fated to become still more and more bewildering. Scarcely had Eugénie installed herself by her fireside, with a book in her hand as a pretext for solitary meditation, when a letter in a strange handwriting was brought in, with a request for an immediate answer.

She could scarcely trust the testimony of her eyes as she examined the signature !—The demand which it seemed to enforce was scarcely less surprising !—

Yet her answer was politely affirmative ; and she retired to a pillow, which multiplied cares and apprehensions promised to render sleepless, after having appointed an interview with a total stranger,—the stranger whose presence she most dreaded upon earth,—at an early hour of the following morning.—

CHAPTER XI.

Elle était sous l'empire d'une de ces situations où tous les sentimens secondaires disparaissent.

CHARLES REYBAUD.

THE apartment occupied by Eugénie at the Hotel de Rostanges, was a type of the snuggeries provided for the junior branches of a great family, in the distribution of the ancient hotels of the Faubourg St. Germain; consisting of a small ante-room, sitting-room, bed-room, and bath-room, overlooking the garden and leading from the vestibule of the suite of rooms inhabited by her sister.

Nothing more elegant, or more indicative of refined taste, than the arrangement of this little

appartement de demoiselle ! — The hangings were of Indian chintz, relieved with a profusion of muslin draperies; the furniture was of ebony, of antique design; and the sole ornaments of the sitting-room consisted of enamels of her parents, after Isabey, and a portrait of her sister, from the pencil of Dubufe. In the bed-room, the only object of a costly nature was a *bénitier*, the ivory crucifix surmounting which, was an exquisite carving by some old Italian master. No gilding, — no porcelain, — no trinkets of fashionable frippery. The toilet-glass was encased in an old-fashioned frame of solid silver, — a family relique. All denoted refined simplicity. But for the richness of the Persian carpets and the beauty of the marbles, it might have passed for the retreat of some middle-aged woman of the most unpretending habits of life.

The peculiar elegance of mind distinguishing Eugénie de Nangis was otherwise and far more honourably demonstrated. — The musical instruments in her sitting-room were accompanied by a collection of the choicest old music of Italy and Germany, interspersed with a few lighter

compositions of modern times, — such as the romances of Schubert, or the operas of Meyerbeer ;—while in her portfolios were collected sketches and drawings in every style of art, memorials of her Italian tour, or Norman home ; and the vigour of Eugénie's architectural etchings of the unequalled Gothic monuments of her native province had done honour to a professional artist.

More indicative still of a mind strictly consonant with her noble form and classic features, was the choice selection of her little library ;—containing the best authors of France, England, Italy, and Germany, chosen without pedantry, prudery, or pretension. No gorgeous binding,—no scarce editions. Her books were friends for every-day intercourse ; not holiday guests for galas and display.—The comfortable chair placed near this happy shrine of her luxurious leisure, indicated the unfailing source of Eugénie's superiority to national prejudices and the vulgarisms of conventional life.

On the morning succeeding the eventful night that witnessed the dispute between Greville and Colonel d'Aramon, two persons were seated

beside the glowing hearth of Eugénie's apartment. Half-leaning on one of the sculptured ibises of pure white marble adorning the chimney-piece, sat Mademoiselle de Nangis in her simple morning painting dress;—her cheek flushed with excitement,—her dark eyes softened by the consciousness of a thousand happy feelings;—while on the adjoining sofa, furred and mantled so as to leave only her pale face discernible, reclined the now languid and attenuated form of —— the Countess of Greville !

Traces of deep emotion were visible in the countenances of both. The explanations in which, for two hours past, they had been absorbed, had begun in mutual fear and dislike, to end in mutual regard, amounting almost to affection. But the sensibility of Eugénie was demonstrated by all the warm impulses of youth; while in Lady Greville, it seemed concentrated into the immobility of a statue.

“We should have met before!”—exclaimed Mademoiselle de Nangis, at the close of Lady Greville's startling narrative. “The national antagonism of French and English which subsists, I fear, unabated at the bottom of all our

hearts, has too long disunited us. Lord Greville entered our society convinced that it contained not a wife true to her duties; and if I rightly interpret your avowals, *you* beheld in *me*, at your last visit to Paris, a girl devoted to dress and dancing, frivolous in her habits,—interested in her views,”—

“You do me wrong!” interrupted the Countess. “I knew my son incapable of attaching himself to a being such as you describe. To find you all I see you, surpasses, I own, my expectations. But, alas! of what avail this recognition of my error?—To aggravate my regrets!—To convince me still more painfully of the extent of the sacrifice imposed upon my son, by his cruel position.”—

“Notwithstanding all you have done to render this miserable history clear to my comprehension,” replied Eugénie, mildly,—“I still seem to misapprehend the nature of Lord Greville’s difficulties. My mind is still so flurried,—my heart so overjoyed by the certainty acquired of his affection through the precious letter you have deigned to confide to me,—that I fear I am dull beyond forgiveness. But to *what* difficul-

ties do you allude?—You tell me that he who to his mother confesses an attachment for me, which he has never avowed to myself, is debarred, by the consciousness of illegitimacy, from seeking me as a wife. It is true, the prejudices of my country are strong against such a stigma;—but only because implying ignoble blood and a neglected education. Greville's descent is pure,—Greville's education is cultivated.—The stain is accidental—a matter of form, not the result of vice or criminality. If his fortunes be affected, mine might surely suffice for both. I am rich, according to *our* estimation of riches. If Greville be rejected by the laws and institutions of his country, let him adopt that of the family eager to claim him as its own. My sister and her husband love him as a brother. Since he must forfeit the splendid home in England, which does not seem to have contributed to his happiness, his place is here.—Yourself, if you would deign to accept my filial devotion, shall be loved and served more faithfully among us, than you have ever been amid the pomps and vanities of your high estate.—Pardon me,—pardon me!”—cried Eugénie, on perceiving that

Lady Greville was concealing her face against the arm of the sofa ; “ I distress you by alluding to your family misfortunes, or even shock you, perhaps, by these frank projects for the happiness of Greville. Consider,” said she, rising and placing herself on a low stool at the feet of Lady Greville, whose hand she gently withdrew from her face, and raised to her lips,—“ consider how I am hurried out of all maidenly decorum, by unexpected insight into the mysteries of a heart, for two years past the object of my dearest anxieties!—Think of all I have borne, in the certainty of loving and the uncertainty of being beloved.—Think of the joy which at this moment overwhelms even my terror of you—*you* whom I have so abjectly feared!—Think of this, and be indulgent with my indiscretion.”

“ Be indulgent with *me*,—be forgiving with *me*,” faltered Lady Greville, in reply,—“ for having so long misapprehended your noble nature. I recognise my fault.—I acknowledge that you are worthy of him ;—nay, dearly as I value my son, I scarcely hold him deserving the devotion of a love so pure, so disinterested!—Were he all the world esteems him in regard

to social distinctions,—were he thrice as rich,—thrice as great,—the universe could not supply him with a wife whom I should fold in my arms with such tenderness and trust;—or on whom I would so gladly bestow the benediction of a mother, as her on whose noble head I lay my hand!—But you mistake in fancying his fortunes precarious. Hugo is still rich. His rank and title only are affected by the circumstances I have confided to you.”

“His rank,—his title!” exclaimed Mademoiselle de Nangis. “Is it for the mere honour of a name, that he is thus cruelly solicitous?—No, I cannot believe it.—I have watched him closely,—studied his sentiments,—his opinions. They are all nobleness,—all simplicity and truth. It would need much to convince me that Greville was capable of sacrificing his happiness and the happiness of others to so mean a vanity!”—

“Blessings on you for the justice you render him!” cried Lady Greville, her hands trembling with emotion as she caressed the lovely being who thus unceremoniously reproved her. “*I* alone am indeed answerable for his fault.—A so-

lemn vow—a sacred promise,—nay, look not thus earnestly into my face, or I shall want courage to avow my weakness. What greater proof of your influence than that I can already *call* it a weakness;—when but yesterday,—nay, when I entered this room,—I still believed it a solemn duty towards myself and others.”

“At this moment, I am too happy to be disposed to find fault,” rejoined Mademoiselle de Nangis, gratefully accepting the affectionate praises of Greville’s mother. “Heaven knows you have suffered too much for me to add a pang to your troubles. I feel, too, that it is not for *me* to plead my cause with you, (or, why not speak frankly, and make it Lord Greville’s as well as my own ?)—for if able to resist *his* appeal to your mercy, mine is scarce likely to be more efficacious!”

“You are mistaken,” replied the Countess, with a grave smile. “You are already attaining over me the ascendancy you have long possessed over my son. Your generosity has made me blush for my selfishness. Besides, since perfect unreserve is establishing itself between us, I will not deny that the absolute au-

thority over Hugo with which I have been invested, and the habit of constantly keeping on my guard against over-indulgence, has betrayed me into a contrary extreme. I have never sufficiently conceded to his predilections. Feelings of anxious mistrust have often warped my conduct towards those I saw distinguished by his love."

"No strong affection without jealousy!"—replied Eugénie, smiling. "It is not, however, too late to repair your injustice towards this spoiled child of fortune, whom we all of us tender so dearly. My poor dying brother-in-law can scarcely bear him out of his sight. Our whole circle entertains for him the most partial regard. The bosom friend of our family, the Count de St. Sévron, was yesterday observing to Monsieur de Rostanges that——"

Lady Greville started from the sofa.

"*Whom* did you say?"—cried she, suddenly and wildly, interrupting Mademoiselle de Nangis.

"You must surely have heard Lord Greville allude to Tristan de St. Sévron, who lately married a relative of our family, the

sister of—but you are ill?—You are over-fatigued?—Your journey has been too much for you!”—cried Eugénie, shocked by the sudden paleness overspreading the countenance of her guest as she sank once more into her seat.

“ You have mentioned a name that calls up terrible associations,” faltered Lady Greville, labouring to recover her composure. “ Know that the object of the late Lord Greville’s miserable infatuation,—the origin of all our family afflictions,—was the wife,—the widow,—of a Comte Emile de St. Sévron !”—

“ I remember,” observed Mademoiselle de Nangis, scarcely less startled and affected than her companion, “ that Monsieur de Rostanges often warned us never to allude to the parents of St. Sévron in his presence. His mother, I am aware, died in emigration ; for it was to procure her *extrait mortuaire* from a Scottish clergyman of the name of Blair, that the Count, previous to his marriage with Sidonie de Chau-lieu, undertook a journey into Scotland.”

“ Blair—the wretched Blair !”—cried Lady Greville with increasing agitation.

“But on consideration,” resumed Eugénie, “St. Sévron’s father certainly did not perish on the scaffold. The Comte Emile survived to a good old age. I have seen the inscription on his tomb, in the family mausoleum at St. Sévron. He was one of those who miraculously escaped during the reign of terror,—his name having been actually returned among the victims.”

She could not proceed. Lady Greville’s hand had eagerly seized upon her arm,—Lady Greville’s eyes were fixed wildly upon her face.—

“Are you *sure* of this?”—cried she, inarticulate from perturbation. “Are you not deceiving yourself and me?”—

“To what end?”—mildly inquired Eugénie, unable fully to enter into the position of her agitated guest. And while still forbearingly awaiting the reply of Lady Greville, momentary silence between them rendered still more startling the violence with which the door of the apartment was suddenly flung open,—when Sophie, hurrying towards her sister, threw herself weeping into her arms.—

“What has happened?—Is Rostanges ill?”—exclaimed Eugénie, dreading the worst. “Com-

pose yourself, dearest, compose yourself! Poor Lady Greville is herself so feeble, so suffering, that—”

“*Lady Greville?*”—cried Madame de Rostanges, starting back, and gazing with pity and consternation on the strange guest. “In the horror of the moment, I did not recognise her. How kind, how considerate, at such a moment to come and break to you the sad tidings!”

The colour rose to the cheek of Eugénie. She could scarcely understand the earnestness with which Madame de Rostanges appeared to sympathize in the disclosures of the Countess.

“St. Sévron assures us that there is still hope!”—resumed Sophie, suddenly addressing the Countess. “Take courage, dear lady! The strength with which he supported the probing of his wound—”

“In Heaven’s name, of what are you talking?”—cried Eugénie, agitated in her turn.

“Of that which I perceive has wrung tears from your eyes, dearest sister, as well as from those of his unfortunate mother!—Oh! Eugénie, had you but complied with my request, and gone to Madame A.’s last night, this rash quarrel,—

this mad duel,—might have been prevented ! St. Sévron assures me that the provocation offered by d'Aramon to Lord Greville was such as—”

It was now the turn of the terrified Countess to interrupt her with a demand for explanations,—explanations, alas ! that only came too soon. A hostile meeting had taken place that morning. The Colonel was slightly,—Lord Greville desperately, wounded.

“ To find you here with Eugénie, both pale, both agitated,” said Madame de Rostanges, in extenuation of her abruptness, “ convinced me, Madam, that you knew all, and prevented my using the precautions I should otherwise have felt indispensable.”

But she excused herself to unconscious ears. The Countess lay senseless on the sofa ; while Eugénie, scarcely more in a condition to offer aid or comfort, bent over her, administering tenderly to her assistance.

Satisfied, from the stormy explanations which took place after quitting Madame A.’s the preceding night, that a pacific termination to the affair was impossible, Lord St. George had

reluctantly entered into the arrangements of d'Aramon and his friend, for a meeting at Montrouge, at an early hour; and Greville, desperate and excited, returned to his hotel for the fulfilment of the harassing duties demanded by his critical position. A letter of explanation to his mother, of farewell to Eugénie, must be prepared, in case the event of the morrow should prove fatal; and while pouring forth in the latter the long-repressed feelings of his heart,—while vindicating himself from the odium of having sanctioned vilification of a person as dear to his respect as to his affections,—his indignation against d'Aramon,—the informer, the slanderer,—attained so high a point, that it had been scarcely safe for the burly Colonel to enter his presence at that moment, even *cuirassé* to the utmost extent of military appointment.

He told her all;—how he had loved her, how he had sought in distant countries a solace for his unavailing sorrows. The whole mystery of his fate was developed; and he besought her to love and regret him in the grave, as it had

been denied him to implore her affections while breathing the breath of life.

“ You cannot have misapprehended the warmth of my attachment,” said Greville, in this unqualified disclosure of his feelings. “ You must long have known how tenderly I love you. I have now declared the origin of the reserve which forbade the avowal of my passion; and you will respect my motive. A nature good and noble as yours will recognise the submission due to the authority of a mother.

“ And yet Eugénie, *now*, on the brink of the grave, new intelligence seems to brighten my soul! I ask myself whether the filial submission has not been exaggerated, which has allowed her to sacrifice my happiness—*our* happiness—to the false idol of worldly opinion? I ask myself whether I ought not to have dealt otherwise with her;—to have expressed myself more firmly,—to have convicted the selfishness of her opposition to my welfare.—At this solemn moment, ‘ I see as from a tower the end of all!’—the wreck of our prospects,—the extinction of a life that might have been directed to nobler purposes,—to the

good of my fellow-creatures,—the glorification of God!—

“What have I been?—What account can I render of the good things entrusted to me?—To what wise or useful purpose have I directed the blessings of Providence?—Alas! I have been a weakling—an instrument in the hands of others—an indistinguishable particle of the mass whose deeds are of such poor account in the sight of Heaven!—To release me from my perplexities, I trusted to time.—Vain reliance,—the reliance of fools!—What minute of the measure of eternity can be called our own?—

“Yet, had my hopes prospered, what a life of joy and usefulness might have been ours! What delights were, perhaps, in store for me, with the companion assimilated to my views and principles, as to my dreams of passionate love! Eugénie!—when you peruse this, and reflect upon the bitterness of this hour of disappointment, when, in reviewing these broken trusts, I behold the grave opening before me,—you will deign to pity, and forgive. Be it the consolation of my last moments to believe that the blood I am about to shed for your sake, may prove an

eternal bond of affection connecting you with the memory of the dead !”—

Softened by these tender and saddening reminiscences, Greville became still more and more impressed by the solemnity of the crisis awaiting him. “A fitting termination for a life of pretences!—to fall by the hand of a man intent only upon sacrificing me as a stepping-stone to his interests !”—cried he, as, with hurried footsteps, he paced his solitary chamber. “What, what has availed the brilliant position I have seemed to occupy, or the advantages I have enjoyed?—The sole ambition of my heart blighted!—even that intense affection for my poor mother which brightened my boyhood, deadened and obscured by the experience of maturity. Yes! I deserve to die,—for I have done nothing to prove myself deserving of life.”

To the Countess, his adieux were of a still more detailed, and scarcely less affecting nature. Little suspecting his mother to be at hand, and breathing the same atmosphere with himself, he addressed his farewell letter to her at Greville Abbey, imploring her to extend her regard in after life to the valued being whom it had not

been permitted him to present to her affections as a daughter. Instituting Lady Greville sole heir to his property, he recommended his people to her goodness, himself to her tender recollection. But not one word tending to impress her with an idea that he had, at any moment, found her authority oppressive, or her prohibitions severe. Too late now to amend the system and opinions of his mother, in his last moments he wished to recollect only her affection.

It was not without deep emotion that Lord Greville affixed his seal to these letters,—an act that seemed to cut him off from among the living. The dispiriting reflections to which they had given rise, rendered his pillow sleepless,—a bad preparative for the duties of the morrow. But, as day approached, he recalled to mind that his eyes must not be found hollow with watching, or his cheeks blanched by anxiety, and roused himself for a cheerful welcome to Lord St. George, when offering his thanks for the important service he had accepted in his behalf.

“My dear Grev, I have a great regard for you,—greater than my careless habits may lead

you to suspect," replied St. George, cordially returning the pressure of his hand. "But I tell you fairly, that if I knew any possible means of throwing you over on this occasion, or putting an end to this damned foolish business, I would do it!—You have no business to risk yourself in such a quarrel,—a stupid, unmeaning, vulgar, *bal masqué* squabble.—You owe yourself to your mother, my dear fellow,—you owe yourself to your country,—you—"

"Enough, enough!—we talked this over last night, and ended by admitting that it was now too late, and that the meeting was inevitable," cried Greville, provoked by his pertinaciousness.

"Were our antagonists any other than Frenchmen," cried St. George, "I would, even now, advise conciliation. But I fear I must admit with you that we have gone too far to recede. We must not let these cursed fellows have the best of it."

St. George was yet more eager to prevent the "cursed fellows having the best of it," when, at the appointed hour, they took their ground at Montrouge.

The writer who assigned as necessities of life to Frenchmen, "*du pain et des spectacles*," might more aptly have formed a triad by the addition of "duelling." The love of duelling is, in fact, one of the strongest instincts in the *Coq Gaulique*; bequeathed, as the French contend, by those chivalrous institutions which maintain a more superficial growth in our *nation boutiquière*. Whatever the origin, duelling affords an excitement,—a melodrama *en action*,—which finds a correspondent chord in their bosoms. This wanton infringement of one of the sternest commandments of God, which, if a bet be called the last argument of a fool ought certainly to be defined the last argument of a madman, is regarded by the Parisians as merely a sparkling incident in a life of pleasure, and one of the inevitable duties of a public man.

On the ground at Montrouge, accordingly, Colonel d'Aramon assumed the moral and physical amplification of the frog in the fable; except that, instead of trying to emulate an ox, he evidently fancied himself an elephant. The earth seemed scarcely solid enough for his gigantic tread,—more especially the excavated

earth of that region of quarries. Impossible to be more pompous, more magniloquent; and Lord St. George, the easy, unassuming man of the world, would have scarcely refrained from a laugh, but that the idea of Greville,—the high-bred, popular, promising Greville,—exposed to mortal peril from such a hand, inclined him rather to tears. Even General d'E——, usually rational and agreeable, seemed to have added a cubit to his stature by the simple fact of having a case of duelling pistols in his hand; and St. George actually ground his teeth with rage, at finding himself compelled to observe the ceremonies and deferences of life with two individuals who, on an occasion so fearfully matter of fact, persisted in playing fantastic tricks, as if a fashionable audience were collected to applaud their *fanfaronade*.

It was a chilly winter morning. The surface of the snow, having yielded to the sun of the preceding afternoon, had lost the freshness which prevents even snow from being unsightly. The beaten track on the causeway of the Route d'Orléans, shewed dingily amid the surrounding whiteness; and at that early hour, a heavy

mist hovered over the ground, leaving to view here and there the dimly-seen skeleton of some solitary tree, extending its dark scraggy boughs through the fogs of the plain. The season and the scene were cheerless and depressing. It was not the first time that Lord St. George had officiated in a duel.—But on the present occasion, when he saw the noble, handsome, gifted, generous Greville leap out of the carriage and hasten towards the spot selected by General d'E—— and himself for their luckless purpose,—Greville, so young, so distinguished, so superior to his companions and every other object visible at that moment between the earth and the sky,—it required all his self-command to refrain from treating the affair as a sacrifice to be peremptorily prevented, rather than as one of the uncivilized forms of civilized life, of which the pitiful vanity of human nature has prevented the abolition.

When he beheld, a few minutes afterwards, Lord Greville stretched senseless, apparently lifeless, upon the ground, by the fire of his bullying antagonist, all that had been fermenting

in his bosom, combined with the bitterest self-reproaches, burst forth into imprecations and invectives, of which d'Aramon and his friend were luckily too little skilled in the queen's English to appreciate the purport.

With the assistance of the surgeon and confidential servant he had brought with him to that desolate spot, Lord St. George hastened to remove the body of his friend into the carriage; leaving behind them, on their sad way, an ensanguined track upon the snow. Greville still remained insensible; and on their arrival at the Rue de Lille, where he was lifted exhausted from the carriage, an announcement of his death spread rapidly through the hotel. The post-horses were at that moment waiting in the courtyard to convey him to St. Denis. His absence at such a moment had already begun to excite the wildest surmises; and on the arrival of Lord St. George's carriage, François was eagerly on the look-out for his master. The grief of the poor *laquais de place* on finding him brought home, apparently a corpse, was exceeded only by his indignation at the want of confidence

which had excluded him from participation in a scene of such profound interest as a duel at Montrouge !

His wrath was still further excited on finding himself despatched by Lord St. George in search of Roux and Marjolin, at the request of Gunning, the able English surgeon already in attendance. Another messenger was despatched at the same moment for the Comte de St. Sévron. Regarding the Count as the only Frenchman on whose collected good sense he could rely for advice at such a crisis, Lord St. George was glad to lessen his responsibility by obtaining the friendly aid of one of the persons most distinguished by the predilections of his unfortunate friend,—little surmising that this measure would be the means of apprising Lady Greville herself of the perilous condition of her son !

Despair was in the countenances of every one surrounding the couch of the sufferer. A professional opinion had admitted that there was little likelihood of his surviving the extraction of the ball !—

CHAPTER XII.

Il y eut dans la chambre un bruit de sanglots et de gémissemens étouffés. Il était quatre heures. Les derniers rayons d'un soleil de Novembre arrivaient dans les vitres des fenêtres.

ST. FELIX.

COULD Lady Greville have experienced comfort of any kind at such a crisis it had been in the deep and tender interest she found bestowed upon the dying-bed of her son. At Greville Abbey, amid his own people and in his father's house, he could not have been more affectionately tended than in the land of strangers. She, who had so often reviled his partiality for the French, was touched

by the tears shed for the fate of one whom they lamented, not as the favourite of fortune, but as a kindly human being, endeared to them by his gentle qualities. On her arrival at the hotel, she was forbidden to approach his bedside,—forbidden on grounds which compelled even her restlessness to remain transfixed in an adjoining chamber. After the operation of extracting the ball, the surgeons assured her that any emotion tending to the renewal of the hæmorrhage, must be instantly fatal.

There she sat,—motionless, feeble, helpless, hopeless,—her eyes fixed upon the door of the chamber that contained her dying son; watching every one who came out, as if the fiat of life or death were inscribed in their countenance. She knew that but a slight partition divided her from the object of all her tenderness,—all her solitudes;—from him who haunted her dreams, who engrossed her waking thoughts, who interposed betwixt her and her earthly duties,—the cares of her salvation;—him, on whose beloved face it had been denied her to look for so long a period, and whom she

must never again behold till fixed in the rigidity of death.—Was it—was it but to support this cruel bereavement, she had lived and suffered !

She was not, however, lonely in her afflictions.—A friendly hand was clasped in hers.—A friendly heart shared the heavy burthen of her sorrows. Eugénie had not permitted the poor infirm woman to confront alone the trying scene awaiting her. Superior to all punctilio of worldly delicacy, she had chosen to accompany Greville's mother to the death-bed of her son ; and now sat beside her, cold and motionless, yet retaining her self-possession ; ever and anon whispering words of comfort to her companion, or words of counsel to the flurried friends, who were passing to and fro.

What was it to Eugénie that the society of the Faubourg might blame her being there at such a moment?—Had they not already sacrificed largely enough to the opinion of the world?—Was not the agonized woman by her side a sufficient evidence of the fruitlessness of such martyrdom?—Mademoiselle de Nangis

felt herself entitled to be there. Since the perusal of Greville's letter to his mother, she had become in the spirit his affianced wife. It was a dismal moment for their betrothing ! Greville's heavy moans were perceptible even where they sat. Anguish was around them ;—consternation in every countenance ;—tears on every face !—

Later in the day, a search, instituted for some trifling object needed for the restoration of the exhausted Lady Greville, brought to light the letters left there that morning by the unfortunate Greville, to be forwarded to his mother and Eugénie in case of his death. The Countess was now far beyond the comprehension of what was going on around her. But Mademoiselle de Nangis, on catching sight of her own name in the handwriting of Greville, was not to be deterred from tearing open the letter. Had she wanted an excuse to herself for her presence on the spot, it was contained in those affecting lines. She thanked Heaven, as she pressed the paper to her lips, that her coming had been an act of spontaneous affection, unprompted by that forcible appeal to her tenderness !—

As to the distracted mother, the excitement

of her feelings was gradually reducing her to a state of idiocy. The blow had been so sudden, —had fallen upon her just as the clouds seemed to bewithdrawing from her prospects,—when, by an almost miraculous coincidence, she had achieved at the same moment a conviction of Eugénie's excellence and the certainty of the legitimacy of her son.—And now to find him stretched upon his death-bed;—a death-bed which her presentiments forewarned her owed its origin remotely to her evil influence!—

It was in vain that Eugénie breathed assurances of comfort into her soul. Everything around her was becoming a blank. Her eyes were fixed upon the clock on the chimney-piece, as if watching till the expiration of a certain number of minutes should accomplish her destinies and those of her son. Even when St. Sévron approached them at length with intelligence from the sick-room that the powerful narcotics administered to Greville were taking effect, and that the surgeon stationed on the watch by his bed-side considered his state to be slightly improving, the unfortunate woman gazed upon him with vacant eyes. She was

no longer susceptible of comfort from his information.

Lord St. George had been compelled to seek refuge in flight from the active and severe measures which in France await the fatal issue of a duel. His last act of friendly interposition was to despatch a messenger to his sister, apprizing her of the forlorn condition of Lady Greville. But Lady Louisa, to whom, as to most others of her countrywomen, the cold, reserved Countess was an object of terror, contented herself with writing an offer of her services;—to violate the proprieties of etiquette by entering Lord Greville's apartments being a stretch of good Samaritanism beyond the scope of a mere woman of the world. Though surrounded by foreigners, Greville was, however, still among friends. Strange fortune!—that it should be by a Comte de St. Sévron the pillow of the dying Earl was composed;—that it should be by the tenderness of Mademoiselle de Nangis, the courage of the unfortunate mother was to be sustained in her bereavement!—

Rumours of the sad catastrophe were now in general circulation. Messages of inquiry from

the court, from the various ambassadors, evinced the deepest interest in the fate of the sufferer. The most earnest offers of service from the English embassy were answered by St. Sévron, with intelligence that Lady Greville herself was on the spot, and that at present nothing could be done for the alleviation of the sufferings of the Earl.

As usual on such occasions, the most preposterous reports prevailed as to the origin and event of the duel.—The evening papers stated, (almost in accordance with the predictions of Lord St. George,) that the quarrel had its origin at the *bal de l'opéra*, in honour of a popular actress.—*La bonne compagnie*, if more polite in its conjectures, was equally inaccurate; for Lady Louisa Clare was named by the English circles,—Madame de Kersakoff by the French,—as the heroine of the dispute visited by so terrible a termination. The decorumites enlarged with suitable emphasis upon the evil consequences of ladies of consideration condescending to the *mêlée* of a *bal masqué*; while the rational world discoursed upon the sin and wickedness of so ignominious a sacrifice, on the

part of one of the most promising young men of the British empire.

It was fortunate for d'Aramon that he was slightly wounded!—But for that modified atonement, he would have been denounced as an assassin, or assassinated on the spot. The coteries of the Faubourg already scouted him as an apostate;—they wanted little encouragement to revile the ex-Carlist Colonel as a murderer!—The St. Pierres, the Clermonts, the Sennevals, Cerny, St. Aymar, and Chaulieu sorrowed for the handsome and popular young Englishman, as for a countryman of their own.

To administer to the consolation of Lady Greville, was a comfort denied to Mademoiselle de Nangis. Late in the evening, she was summoned home for the discharge of duties scarcely less peremptory or less painful. Monsieur de Rostanges was expiring, and desired in his last moments to entrust her sister to her arms. Through the indiscretion of a servant, news of Lord Greville's danger, nay, a report of his death, had reached his ears; and before Eugénie could accomplish even the short distance dividing her from the Rue St. Domi-

nique, the feeble sufferer had breathed his last!—

Even under this accumulation of misery, the presence of mind of Eugénie did not desert her.—Though apparently reduced to stupor by the succession of afflictions heaped upon her young head,—for she neither shed a tear nor uttered an exclamation when accosted, on the threshold of the hotel, by poor old Baptiste, with the fatal tidings,—she proceeded mechanically to the chamber of death. Little had she thought, in parting so carelessly with her brother-in-law the preceding night, that the only token of greeting she should ever again bestow upon him, would be a farewell kiss imprinted upon his senseless remains!— Little, very little, had she imagined, when preparing that morning to welcome the dreaded Lady Greville in her apartment, that before night, she should instal poor Sophie there as a widow, to remove her from the presence of the dead!—

Amid all her anguish, she had now to listen to the self-accusations with which Madame de Rostanges reviled herself for the want of care which could allow the tidings of Greville's unhappy fate to reach the invalid.—She had to

listen to Sophie's protestations that, but for that oversight, but for the inadvertence of Pierre, the life of the poor infirm Marquis might have been spared for days and even weeks.—*For days!—for weeks!*—And Greville,—who in the noon of manhood,—the full prime of vigour and distinction,—was lying on his death-bed!—

* * * * *

It might be that the mercy of Providence was moved by the intense earnestness of prayer, with which, that night on her knees in the house of death, the broken-hearted girl addressed her supplications to Heaven in behalf of the house of sickness.—The object of her humble intercessions was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow;—a plea consecrated by divine commiseration!—

Certain it is that, within a few weeks of the committal of the remains of the Marquis de Rostanges to the grave,—within a few weeks of the gloomy day when the medical attendants of Lord Greville shook their heads over his case as hopeless,—he was seated, almost convalescent, in his dressing-room;—his happy mother and affianced wife taking turns to amuse him by

reading aloud, as a relief to the far greater excitement of conversation.

All was well with them. The explanations afforded by St. Sévron had confirmed the surmises of Lady Greville, and the hopes of Eugénie; the legitimacy of the Earl being absolutely established by the certification of the death of Comte Emile de St. Sévron, at an advanced period of the Empire. It was evident that the difficulties of communication produced throughout Europe by the wars of Napoleon, had betrayed the destinies of the Earl and his weak and unfortunate father to the malpractices of an adventurer.

On this unhappy topic, however, for St. Sévron's sake, they soon ceased to dwell; as for Lady Greville's, they resolved never to revert to the sufferings of their long probation. Arrangements were made for the removal of the invalid to the Countess's airy and cheerful apartments at the Hotel de Londres, in the Place Vendôme; whither, on her precipitate visit to Paris, she had betaken herself to avoid recognition. It was there, the happy marriage was to be solemnized, affording a

balm to so many griefs, and promising a long continuance of happy years to the young lovers.

Lady Greville did not so much as indulge an apprehension that her French daughter-in-law would be ill-disposed to adopt the habits of England, or resign herself to the tranquil monotony of Greville Abbey. She could not forget that, when believing her beloved Hugo to be despoiled of his inheritance, Eugénie was eager to offer her fortune to his participation ; and that, in shame and sorrow as in prosperity, she had made proof of a devotion which even a mother—even the mother of an only son—avowed to be worthy of its object.

Some surprise was excited in Oxfordshire, when Dowdeswell received from the Countess instructions of the noblest nature relative to the marriage settlements, and preparations for the bride. At Brooksfield Manor, all was horror,—among the Hardys, all consternation. For four and twenty hours, the borough of Squeamington was in an uproar ;—Anodyne, like a bird of the air, having carried the news even into the mayor's chamber.

By degrees, however, they reconciled them-

selves to the startling idea of a young Countess of Greville—a French Countess of Greville!—But a few weeks before, they had been startled by the newspapers with a report that the Earl had fallen in a duel; and it was by no means an unwelcome compromise that, instead of being food for worms, he should be food for Cupids. The fact of the bride being a foreigner, was a relief to the self-love of all who had entertained designs upon Greville Abbey. It was some comfort that a countrywoman of their own had not been preferred in their room.

The only person really to be compassionated in the business, was Horace Greville; who, after receiving congratulations from his friends and creditors, upon the death of his cousin, and even having his orders taken by his tailor for the customary suit of solemn black, found that, instead of wills and testaments, marriage settlements were the order of the day!—He had soon to learn that, so far from being deposited in Père la Chaise, Hugo, eleventh Earl of Greville, had been united at the chapel of the British Embassy to a young and beautiful wife, of descent equal to his own, affording every prospect that

the twelfth Earl would not rejoice in the Christian name of Horace.

From *one* nook, meanwhile, of the neighbourhood of Greville Abbey,—a nook usually so flippant in the discussion of its affairs,—there issued not a syllable concerning the marriage. Hill Hall was silent,—Hill Hall was deserted ! Though Fred Massingberd had cut his old father to the soul by inquiring, with a sneer, “ Who the devil would be found to buy or hire such a cursed old barn, except to convert it into a manufactory or a boarding-school ? ” — Hill Hall was announced by the county papers “ to be let or sold. ” — The old people had found a temporary refuge with their son-in-law at Cobham Park ; but it was whispered in the strictest confidence, between Dr. and Mrs. Graves and Anodyne, that the person of the poor old squire had previously been subjected to the indignity of an arrest, in consequence of the engagements he had rashly undertaken to liquidate for his worthless son.

Certain it is that the stock of the estate was suddenly sold off ; and even young Patroclus

would have fallen to the share of the Hollingses, or some other of Mr. Massingberd's more prosperous tenants, had not Dowdeswell, as a token of affection for the old squire, stepped forward with a handsome price in the name of the Earl of Greville. It is rumoured, moreover, that, on the very day the sale took place, the redoubtable Fred was seen lounging in the Champs Elysées, capitally mounted, in company with Lady Louisa Clare and her brother.

Already the Grevilles had quitted Paris on their return to England. The deep mourning of the Rostanges family was a sufficient pretext for omitting the usual festivities attendant on a foreign wedding. But at the Catholic solemnization, the Countess beheld her beautiful daughter-in-law escorted to the altar by all that was illustrious among the historical names of France.

It was easy, meanwhile, for Eugénie to quit her native country without a tear. Her sister was the companion of her exile. The gentle Sophie, to whom Lady Greville was attaching

herself almost as much as to her sister, was easily persuaded to bear them company to the Abbey. Though inheriting the immense personality of the Marquis, his estates in Normandy, and the Hotel in the Rue St. Dominique were attached to the Majorat, and descended to his heir ; and while the Faubourg St. Germain promises itself, or rather promises the Prince de Chaulieu, that at some future time the lovely widow shall return to Paris to reap in his affection the reward of her exemplary devotion as a wife,—(the valiant Colonel of Cuirassiers, recovered from his wound, having also put forward pressing pretensions to her hand,) Madame de Rostanges remains in England, happy in the seclusion of that princely and beautiful abode which has assumed more than all its former attractions in the eyes of the Countess Dowager.

Completely restored by the restoration of her son, there is no more talk of Torquay for Lady Greville, —no further idea of her removal from her old home.—To Eugénie, there would be profanation in the idea ; and she has made it clear to the happy mother

that her presence in her son's household is indispensable, to complete her initiation into the customs of a foreign country.

It would be difficult to imagine a happier or more united ménage than the one at this moment assembled at the Abbey. The tenants have been nobly feasted,—the neighbourhood hospitably welcomed.—Sunshine seems at length to have found its way into the glades of that fine old park.

One circumstance was noticed with peculiar satisfaction by the neighbourhood soon after the re-instatement of the family. The advertisements for the sale of Hill Hall were withdrawn from the county papers, and the placards from its gates; and it is rumoured that the good squire is likely to find his way back to the old spot, and close his eyes under the roof of his fathers. Already young Patroclus is frisking once more in his old paddock; and though Dowdeswell preserves a rigid silence on the subject, Lord Brooks has hinted to his lady “ *his PRIVATE and CONFIDENTIAL conviction*, that this was effected by *a noble sacrifice* ON THE PART OF LORD

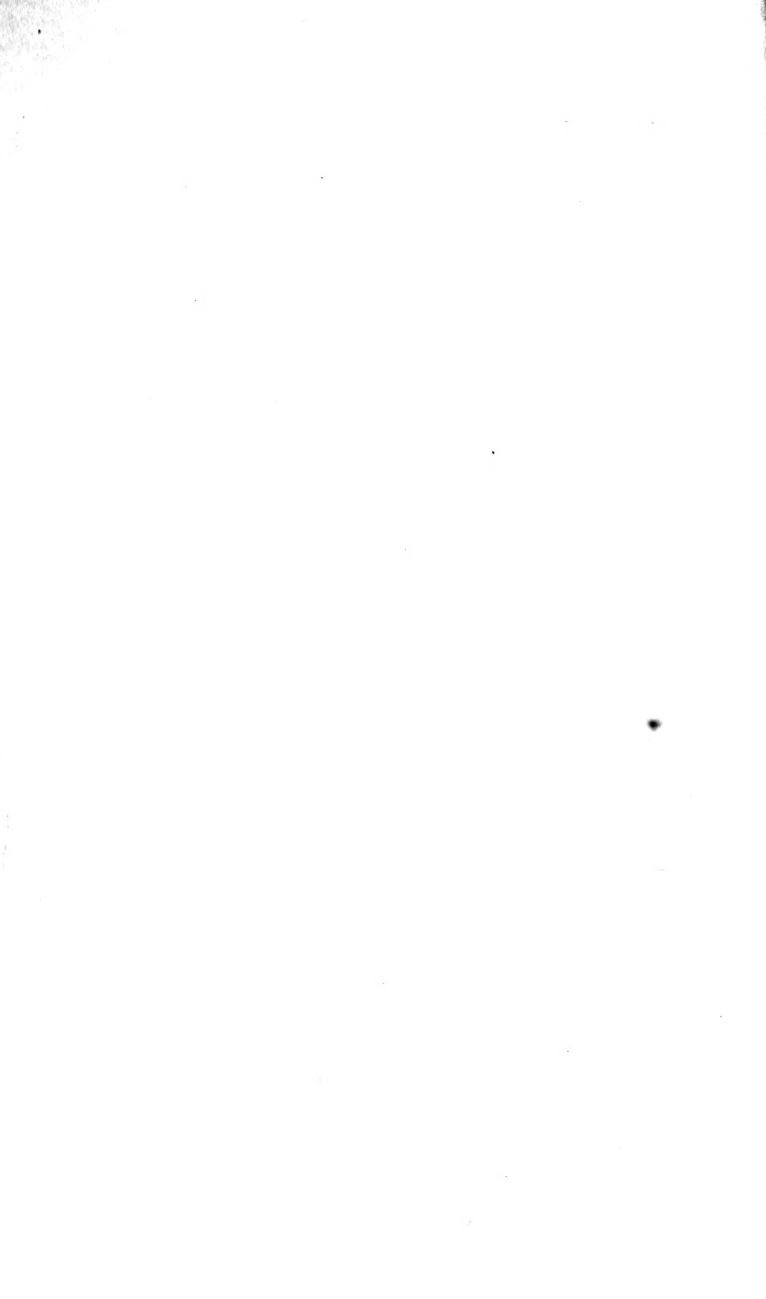
GREVILLE in favour of the *friend of his father!*"—

Both the Countess and the Dowager, meanwhile, promised themselves to cheer the return of the old family by their neighbourly attentions. The Hall has been swept and garnished, and subjected to complete repair, the prodigal, by whose vices the ancient family was reduced to brink of ruin, having forfeited all power to endanger a second time the home and happiness of his father.

"*My health?*"—exclaimed the Countess Dowager, the other day, in reply to the officious interrogations of Anodyne,—mortified to find his professional duty reduced to attendance on the servants' hall.—"I am now too happy to dream of being ill—too busy to be nervous! There is a soul of goodness, we are told, in things evil. My son has been roused to due appreciation of the blessings vouchsafed him, by the reflexions of a death-bed; I, to the happiness of being his mother, by my anguish in the prospect of losing him. We have all, in short, learned the valuable lesson—to confide in Providence and

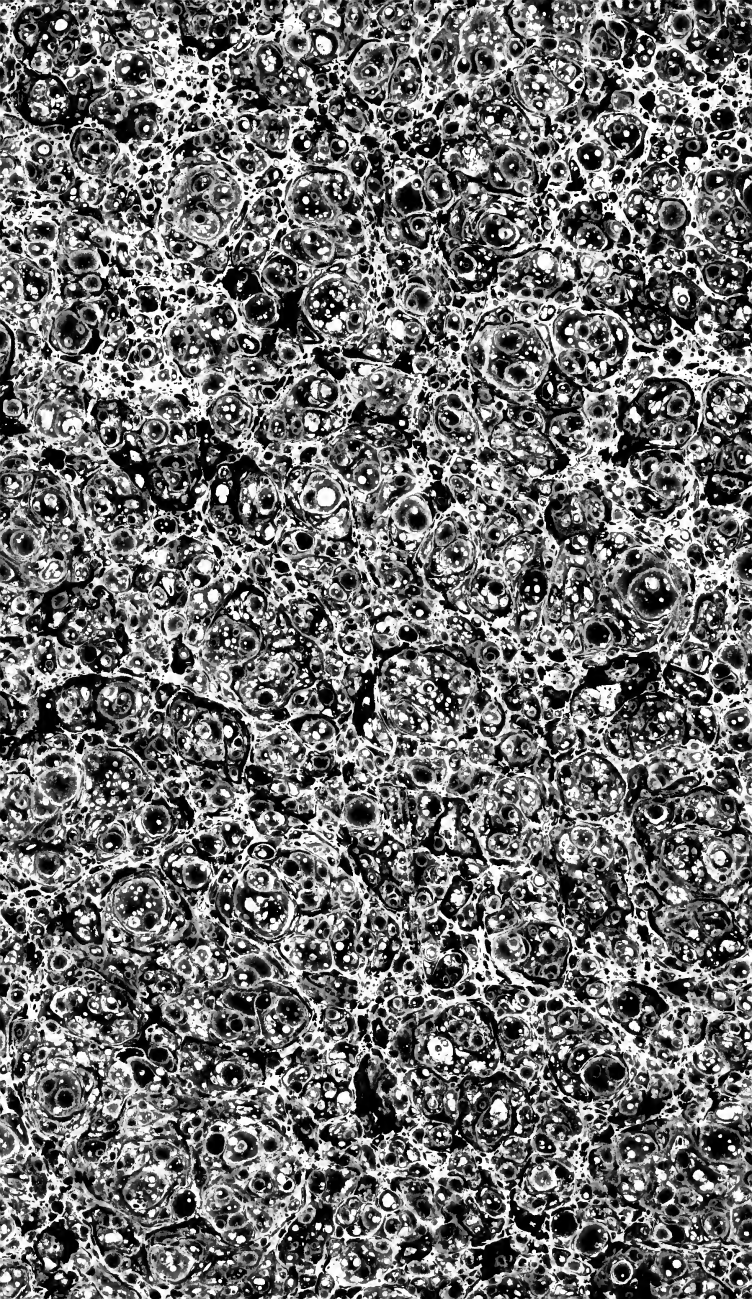
each other, and to be content !—And to think,” added she, turning affectionately toward the gentle Madame de Rostanges, who was occupied with an embroidery-frame by her side, “to think that I am compelled to attribute the accomplishment of my dearest hopes to the influence of A SEASON IN PARIS !”—

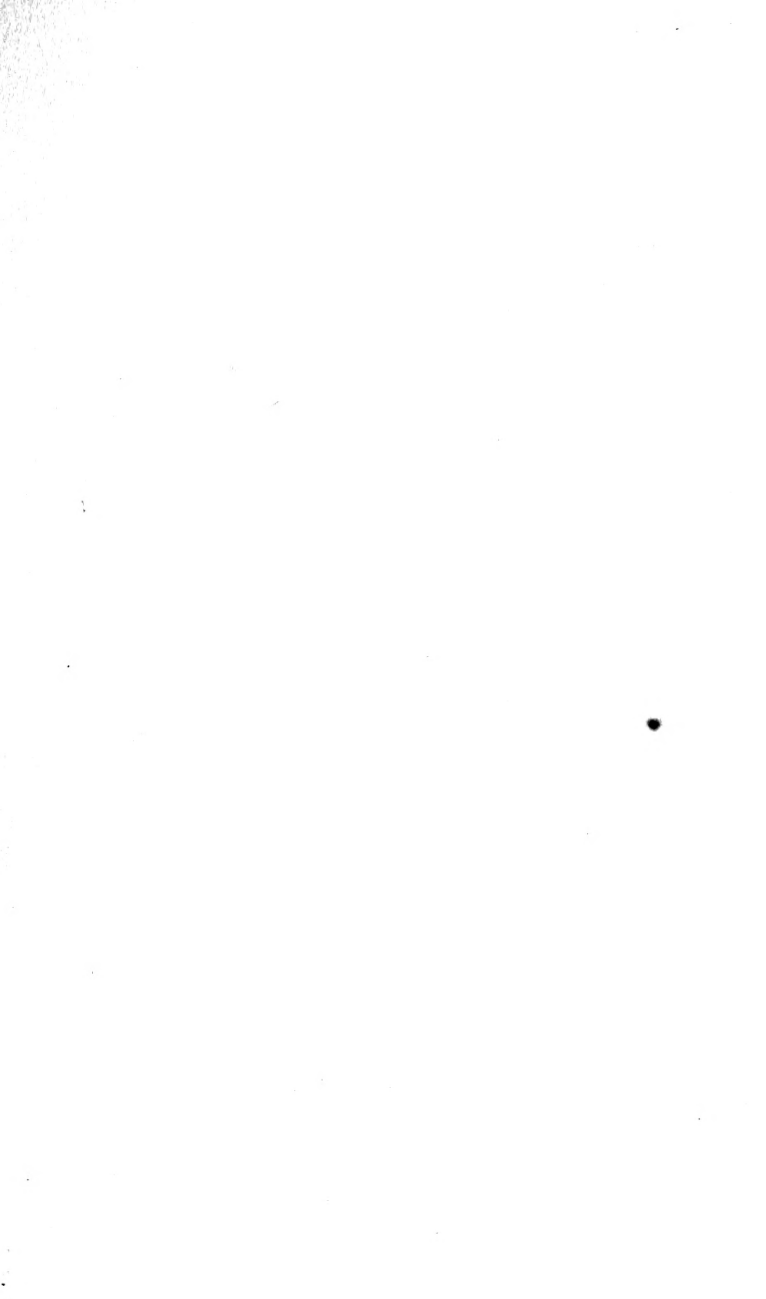
THE END.















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